

IN THESE TIMES

VOL. 8, NO. 20

APRIL 18-24, 1984

\$1.25

*Supermarkets
bring superwoes*

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9 TO 5

German metal
workers lead fight
for a 35-hour work
week to offset
unemployment
caused by
automation.

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Jackson and the Farrakhan factor

By John B. Judis

WASHINGTON

"Of all the candidates in this campaign, only Jesse Jackson will be remembered in the history books. I promise you that," said Barry Commoner, the vice-chair of Jackson's campaign and the 1980 candidate of the Citizens Party. With former Vice-President Walter Mondale and Sen. Gary Hart biting huge chunks out of each other's credibility each week, Commoner's statement may be right. If Ronald Reagan is reelected, the 1984 campaign will probably only be remembered for Jackson's astonishing showing.

But the ongoing question about Jackson is exactly what he and his campaign will be remembered for. Will it be because he initiated a new black movement, a worthy successor to Dr. Martin Luther King's civil rights movement? A new Democratic left unseen since the New Deal or even the old American Socialists? Or because the 1984 campaign further exacerbated relations between blacks and whites and laid the groundwork for continued Republican hegemony? These questions were dramatized on April 3, the day of the New York primary. That morning, the *Washington Post* reported that Louis Farrakhan, the leader of the Nation of Islam and a key Jackson campaigner, had, in a radio speech the month before, threatened the life of *Washington Post* reporter Milton Coleman. Coleman was responsible for the *Washington Post* report that Jackson had used the anti-Semitic term "Hymie" and "Hymietown" in conversations with black reporters.

That evening, results from the primary showed that Jackson had won 90 percent of the black vote, had received over a quarter of the total vote and had almost shaded Hart. His showing—and his win in Philadelphia in the April 10 Pennsylvania primary—suggest that either Mondale or Hart will have to come to terms with Jackson if they want the black vote in November. But Farrakhan's statement, and Jackson's subsequent unwillingness to repudiate its maker, argue that any Democrat who does embrace Jackson will risk a substantial "white backlash" in November.

Farrakhan's threats.

In a February speech, Farrakhan had embarrassed the Jackson campaign when he threatened American Jews if they "harmed" Jackson. In his speech March 11, he called Coleman a "traitor," a "Judas" and an "Uncle Tom," and called upon blacks to ostracize him. While stating that "at this point, no physical harm" was being threatened, he vowed that "one day soon we will punish you with death." In this speech, Farrakhan also described Adolf Hitler as "a great German" who "rose Germany up from the ashes."

Farrakhan later explained that he was not really threatening Coleman's life, but even if he did not intend to make good upon his words, his words might be sufficient to inspire someone else. (Farrakhan had uttered a similar "threat" against Malcolm X prior to his assassination.) In any case, the reality of Farrakhan's metaphor was sufficient to prompt the city of Washington, D.C., to supply Coleman with police protection.

As had occurred earlier in the flap over Jackson's use of the terms "Hymie" and "Hymietown," Jackson inflamed the controversy by his own response. While disavowing Farrakhan's threat, he refused to disavow him. At the same time, he insisted that Farrakhan was simply another campaign supporter whom he could not take any personal responsibility for. But as Jackson's critics pointed out, Farrakhan had personally accompanied Jackson, at Jackson's invitation, to Syria last December; he had frequently stood in for Jackson as a "surrogate" at campaign rallies, including last week in Philadelphia; and his organization's men have served as Jackson's bodyguards.

On the April 8 Meet the Press, Jackson parried questions about

Farrakhan with an awkwardness that recalled the way Republican conservatives used to try to deflect questions about John Birch Society support. For instance, asked about Farrakhan's relationship to the campaign, Jackson said, "Well, he has a surrogate role as one who volunteered to make a contribution. I have no ability to muzzle surrogates who want to make a contribution." Then when asked why he had not repudiated Farrakhan, Jackson said, "My basic attitude when people make errors is to try to redeem them, try to revive them."

Jackson's unwillingness to repudiate Farrakhan is probably not because of any great political affinity between them. Jackson, who came out of the "integrationist" wing of the civil rights movement, has never displayed any sympathy for the Muslims' view of the "white devil." Jackson's refusal to act appeared to reflect, first, his unwillingness to repudiate part of his own black base, of which Farrakhan is a somewhat significant representative, and, second, his growing feeling of defiance and anger toward those—particularly in the media—whom he believes are out to wreck his campaign.

Alvin Thornton, a Howard University political scientist close to Jackson's campaign, commented, "The way he handled the Farrakhan issue was symbolic of Jackson's will to withstand pressure from the establishment and the media." He imagines that Jackson reasoned in the following manner: "You guys [the media] have been going after me from the start. So why should I distance myself from someone who was with me from the start, who will

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help me organize the constituency I must have. It won't make you stop going after me."

Thornton's explanation is plausible, but disturbing. One might accept Jackson's case that the media are out to get him (the *Washington Post* certainly has been far from friendly, and the Farrakhan story was released a month after it occurred, on the morning of a major primary). But if the media has tried to discredit Jackson among whites and among moderate blacks, he has certainly played into their hands by responding with evasion or defiance.

Debate on the left.

The "Hymie" and Farrakhan incidents have sparked heated debate in the white Democratic left. Although this debate will have little electoral significance outside of Manhattan and the San Francisco Bay area, it is of political importance in understanding what Jackson does and does not represent.

Commoner, Jackson's most prominent white supporter, called the furor over Farrakhan "nitpicking." He described a *New Yorker* cartoon of an elderly lady, seated before an easel in an art museum, copying "The Rape of the Sabine Women," but only reproducing a butterfly from the painting. Commoner commented, "It is always possible with a complex subject for people to look at one piece or another and get a distorted picture. The Jackson campaign is a historic change in American politics. Farrakhan, the Jewish issue is not a fundamental part of it." For Commoner, Jackson's historic significance is in his approach to economic issues. "The best way of dealing with the national interest is dealing with the problems that the poor and minorities face," Commoner said.

Commoner's position was also represented in *The Nation* by political scientist Phillip Green, who argued that the very

Continued on page 8

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IN THESE TIMES

Southland

butternut
squash

Supermart tries to break union

By David Moberg

CHICAGO

IN THE CONTINUING CORPORATE quest to cut workers' wages and benefits, Jewel Companies, the nation's ninth largest grocery chain has come up with a new twist. In late February, claiming a verbal agreement to reopen the contract that the union denies as the basis for its ac-

tion, the profitable chain unilaterally slashed wages and benefits of its 16,000 union workers.

"If Jewel can get away with it, this will take on epidemic proportions," union attorney Robert Karmal maintained. "The stability and sanctity of the collective bargaining contract would go down the drain. The written contract would be subject to all kinds of attack based on alleged verbal understandings. Any employer could say, 'Don't you re-

Jewel Companies' moves are the latest manifestation of tough management assaults on labor in the competitive grocery business.



member? We said that at our last meeting."

Unions are already reeling from decisions that allow companies to break contracts after simply filing for bankruptcy or to move work and shut down a workplace if a union refuses to make concessions. Jewel's actions take such unilateral employer rights to break contracts a step further.

Jewel's moves are also the latest manifestation of tough management assaults on labor in the competitive grocery business, where workers' contracts have been under attack while the industry itself goes through a major reorganization and shakeout that may ultimately hurt consumers as well as workers.

Jewel, which has been and continues to be very profitable, maintains that during the 1982 negotiations the United Food and Commercial Workers union representatives had essentially agreed to let management rewrite the contract to suit the company's needs if a new warehouse-style grocery competitor entered the Chicago market.

So when Cub Foods opened a monster store in the suburb of Burbank, Jewel called the union in, talked three times, then unilaterally cut wages from between 20 cents and \$1.25 an hour and vacation by as much as one week for its 16,000 union employees. Workers will also lose a scheduled 50-cent pay increase.

Union leaders cried foul. They said they agreed to talk about potential problems, but maintained it was absurd to think that union leaders would agree, verbally or not, to the terms Jewel claimed: if a Cub store opened, the economic terms of the contract would be terminated; if union and management could not agree on a new contract, Jewel's last offer would be unilaterally imposed; and the union surrendered any right to take the dispute to arbitration.

The union filed a \$25 million damage suit for breach of contract and to force Jewel into arbitration, but it also got embroiled in a National Labor Relations Board (NLRB) dispute after the company filed charges. The regional administrator, apparently accepting the company version of the disputed facts, concluded that there was an agreement to reopen the contract, that the two sides had bargained to an impasse and that the company

had the right to cut wages (although the union could still strike). The union appealed, disputing nearly every point of factual judgment—arguing that if the facts were in dispute there should have been a hearing of the case—and legal interpretation.

Many Jewel workers are bitter not only at the company—which controls about 30 percent of the metropolitan Chicago market—but also at the union. "They say what do they need a union for if Jewel can just cut their wages," union steward Tony Ellis said. "But I try to tell them Jewel controls the purse strings." Meanwhile, two other big chains have demanded concessions, and the union has recommended accepting a wage freeze in those disputes pending a decision in the Jewel case.

If Jewel's action angered workers, it pleased investors. Jewel's stock price shot up, and there were rumors of takeover attempts. Jewel returned 21 percent on equity in 1982, and last year's earnings on domestic operations were up to \$83 million, putting it in the top rank for retail food profitability.

Although the details vary from one local market to another, the broad outlines of the Chicago battle can be seen throughout the country. Grocery sales have been fairly stagnant as people buy more food in restaurants. Convenience stores have also cut into traditional supermarket sales. Now there is a significant excess capacity of grocery stores. In this competitive market, food prices in recent years have not risen as quickly as some grocery operating costs.

The marketplace has also changed. Many old-line chains have responded slowly to new consumer demands. And with a deep recession, especially in the industrial heartland, consumer demand declines, especially for the higher-margin non-grocery products and luxury items that supermarkets count on for much of their profit. Even the food industry has to some extent been affected by the "disappearing middle," the decline in purchasing power by the traditional "middle class" of better-paid workers and the expansion of the specialty market among the increasingly affluent upper strata of managers and professionals.

Enter the superstore. Not too many years

Continued on page 22

IN SHORT

Curiouser and curiouser

The Department of Commerce's (DOC) Bureau of Economic Affairs hasn't reported the number of U.S. business failures for the past 20 months, says T.R. Snyder. It seems that statistics from August 1981 to the present haven't made it into the computer at Dun and Bradstreet yet where they'll be processed and then passed on to the DOC for publication. Claiming "computer conversion problems," Rowena Wyant of Dun and Bradstreet told *In These Times*: "We're switching the statistics to computer. I can't tell you if they'll be available next week or next month. If you could just check in every month...."

The AFL-CIO Department of Economic Research hasn't had such a hard time with the same numbers that seem to mystify the Department of Commerce, however. Both the AFL-CIO and the DOC quote the same number for 1981: 16,794 failures. But from there on out the DOC's computer just can't keep up with the furious pace of business failures: 25,364 in 1982 and 30,794 in 1983, according to AFL-CIO statistics. The 1983 level is the highest business failure rate since the Depression era figure of 31,822 in 1931. Snyder, a University of New England professor of economics, finds it "peculiar that during this period of recovery we have higher levels of business failures than at normal recessionary levels." But then, who's telling?

Guerrilla growth

Determined to weed out the guerrilla sympathizers in our midst, the Council for Inter-American Security has zeroed in on the Committee in Solidarity with the People of El Salvador (CISPES) because it "actively works to further the cause of the Salvadoran FDR-FLMN" by giving money to the Salvadoran guerrillas. According to the *National Catholic Reporter*, the conservative council's late March report to the Justice Department also attacked other groups who oppose U.S. intervention in Central America, but it singled out CISPES as the center of a "subversive" network that includes the "most radical elements of American society." According to the Council, CISPES has violated U.S. law by failing to register as a "foreign agent."

Other groups considered Castroite or pro-Communist and therefore worthy of the Council's ire are the Washington Office on Latin America, a church-sponsored lobbying group, and the National Lawyers Guild, an association of left and liberal lawyers. CISPES has co-sponsored events with these groups, and therefore—according to the Council's guilt-by-association logic—is thought to share their deep red "connections." A group that prides itself on leaving no stone unturned, the Council bemoans the fact that "even feminists have linked up with the pro-guerrilla movement" and cites the National Organization for Women's anti-intervention demonstration in 1983 as evidence to support that claim.

Beyond morality

The World Court isn't the only legal body the Reagan administration is trying to avoid lately. The council of the General Agreement on Tariffs and Trade (GATT) recently declared that the presidential embargo that cut back Nicaraguan sugar imports by 90 percent violated several international trade agreements by allowing political considerations to influence trade relations. Once again, the 90-nation body has no power to enforce its decision, but it hopes that international opinion will deter Ronald Reagan. He remains his own man, however. An administration spokesman said that there are no plans for "making any overtures" toward Nicaragua to renew sugar imports.

Ads for change

Tens of thousands of "Vote Brazil, direction elections now" T-shirts and banners filled the streets of Rio de Janeiro during the recent rallies aimed to persuade the Congress of a pro-direct-election vote on April 25. Determined to defeat the government-controlled electoral college system, the opposition parties initiated a well-orchestrated advertising campaign that will cost about \$2 million, according to *Advertising Age*. Besides T-shirts and banners, the money will be used for an intensive 10-day, late April TV campaign of five- and 10-minute commercials. The four major opposition parties—certain that the direct election is crucial to oust the Social Democratic governing party—each donated an hour of the free air time allotted them under Brazilian law for the commercials.

Congressional pablum

If you think members of Congress have been consumed by the meatier issues of military aid allocation or immigration reform this session, the April issue of *The Congress Watcher* will set you straight. It notes that Rep. Manuel Lujan (R-NM) is hotly urging Congress to designate chili as the official food of the U.S. Not wanting to be accused of culinary reductionism, the Southwest representative described the many fine attributes of his regional dish, concluding that "it is a definitive food whose hearty, committed character embodies the robust and indomitable American spirit...."

—Beth Maschinot



Photographer Unknown

Rosario Ibarra is an outspoken opposition leader.

Mexican opposition comes to the fore

MEXICO CITY—Tens of thousands of peasants from all over Mexico traveled to Mexico City last week and converged on the office of the Secretariat of Agrarian Reform. They then marched to historic Zocalo, site of the National Palace, to protest the country's deteriorating economic situation.

As the Mexican crisis deepens and government repression increases, a popular opposition is growing. Rosario Ibarra de Piedra, a leader of the National Front Against Repression and the first woman candidate for president of Mexico (in 1982) told *In These Times*: "The best face of the Mexican government is its foreign policy." This is probably the side best known to radicals and liberals in the U.S. who are aware of Mexico's support for the Sandinista government of Nicaragua and for the leftist rebels in El Salvador, she added.

"But there is one face for the outside world and another for inside Mexico," said Ibarra, "and they're completely different." While Mexico's ruling Institutional Revolutionary Party (PRI) supports rebels in Central America, it kidnaps and tortures members of its own opposition movement, claimed Ibarra.

Since the International Monetary Fund imposed a strict auster-

ity program on the Mexican government in 1983 the economic situation has only worsened. Government spending and food subsidies have been cut back sharply, and the government claims that the rate of inflation has decreased from 100 to 75 percent in the last year. Labor leaders, however, say the rate of inflation is closer to 150 percent. Prices have gone up dramatically for housing, meat, milk, fresh fruit, coffee and services.

The austerity program has plunged the country into the worst depression in more than 30 years with the gross domestic product falling 4.7 percent in 1983, the biggest decline in modern history. Domestic investment has fallen 25.3 percent. Even with the austerity program, Mexico still owes banks and other creditors \$89.9 billion, making it the world's largest debtor.

"Large sectors of the Mexican population simply have no social services because funds have been cut for health programs and education. Unemployment and underemployment are rising," said Ibarra. Two years ago unemployment were estimated at more than 40 percent—and everyone agrees the situation has deteriorated since then.

Though the Mexican government publicizes a campaign

against corruption, Ibarra said the campaign is a "sham." "There are an infinite number of corrupt functionaries. There are also terrible irregularities of kidnapping and torture that aren't addressed by the government." Ibarra estimates that more than 500 political opponents of the government have disappeared in the past few years.

It was the disappearance of her son in 1975 that brought Ibarra into the opposition. A medical student, he vanished nine years ago and has not been seen since. Ibarra went to Mexico City to plead with the government because she believed his disappearance was the work of the police. She became involved in the movement against police repression and stayed on to become its most prominent spokesperson.

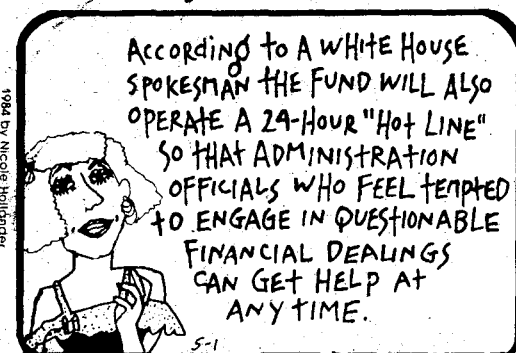
In 1982 she campaigned for president as the champion of Mexico's dispossessed workers, peasants and, particularly, its women. She ran on the ticket of the Revolutionary Workers Party (PRT) though she herself is not a member of the party. "I'm not a member of any party," she said. "Women, workers, peasants saw me running for office and they said, 'She's not a politician, she's not a lawyer, she's a housewife like so many others.'"

Ibarra is also an effective spokesperson for Mexico's opposition movement. She will be speaking in the U.S. through April 26 to inform Americans about the "other face" of the Mexican government.

—Dan LaBotz

SYLVIA

by Nicole Hollander



Original articles, news clips, memos, press releases, reports, anecdotes—send them all to "In Short," c/o *In These Times*, 1300 West Belmont, Chicago, Ill. 60657. Please include your address and phone number.

Delaware guards call "sick-out"

WILMINGTON, DEL.—In a unanimous voice vote on April 3, the Delaware State Corrections Officers, Local 1726, called for a "sick-out" against the Delaware Department of Corrections because of its refusal to re-negotiate the union's contract. The sick-out lasted two days, with more than 30 percent of the prison workers staying home from their jobs.

On April 7, Commissioner of Corrections John L. Sullivan agreed to re-open negotiations. As *In These Times* goes to press, neither the union nor the Department of Corrections will say if progress is being made on the crucial bargaining issues of routine transfers and salaries. The union's contract with the Department of Corrections had lapsed on December 31, 1983, and negotiations had been at an impasse since that time.

Commissioner Sullivan had argued that transfers are the exclusive right of management and that no guidance from the union would be sought or tolerated. Management had used its right of routine transfer to cover staffing shortages at various prisons. In some instances, reports the union, this policy has left one guard in charge of more than 500 inmates.

Claiming that management's staffing policies were creating "unsafe and dangerous situations," Local President Jay Foraker cited more than 339 work-related injuries suffered by a work force numbering only 700.

Other union members echoed his claim. "It's a dangerous place and they still make me work short. The way they're doing it [staffing] is putting my life on the line."

The union is forbidden by state law to negotiate for wages because wages of state employees are fixed by the state legislature. It is up to individual departments to submit budgets which include any proposed wage changes. Sullivan has refused to make any such addition to the 1986 budget. At current salary levels a correction officer's starting pay is \$12,000. This is \$3,000 to \$5,000 lower than wages in surrounding states.

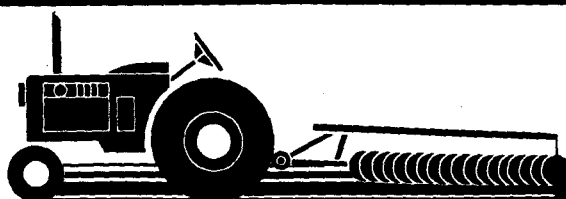
Future moves by the union are uncertain. Foraker counseled patience and short-term political actions including the sick-out at the April 3 meeting. Later he said, "I'm glad we didn't take a strike vote—this group would have voted for it."

Foraker's fears of harmful strike repercussions are well-founded. A member of the state training academy for correction officers claims that the Department of Corrections has a waiting list of more than 200 applicants ready to take union members' jobs. On the first day of the job action Commissioner Sullivan indicated to the press that he was in the process of preparing suspension and dismissal notices; so far, however, none of the correction officers has been fired.

It is feared that Sullivan, who is rumored to have strong political ambitions, will seize the opportunity to take a strong stand against the union. The risks are great on both sides and perhaps still greater to the 2,000 inmates currently serving time in Delaware's prisons.

—Jon Schladen

Delaware corrections officers protest the Department of Corrections' failure to re-negotiate their contract.



Briefing: Teachers, artists, farmers and doctors "aid the enemy"

Before leaving for Nicaragua in January, San Francisco juggler Nancy Levidow mailed out a fundraising appeal for equipment for Nicaragua's national circus. For Levidow and the other artists who contributed to the circus aid campaign, the contributions were both a small political statement against U.S. policy in Nicaragua and a sign of friendship. Levidow and other U.S. jugglers presented the gifts during a national circus performance for an appreciative Nicaraguan audience.

Citizens of Berkeley, Calif., have also decided to counter U.S. government policy in Central America—by opting for their own voluntary aid proposal for El Salvador. On July 19 of last year, the city council voted to adopt the FMLN-controlled town of San Antonio Los Ranchos as its sister city. Berkeley residents have contributed \$11,000 in non-military aid to the town so far.

When word came last August that San Antonio had been bombed and its 1,200 *campesinos* had been evacuated to surrounding villages, the food and medical supplies purchased by Berkeley donations were re-routed to the town's displaced residents.

As Berkeley continues to send money, Mayor Gus Newport has called for a congressional investigation of the bombing, citing Geneva Convention prohibitions against attacks on civilian targets.

There are nine major people-to-people aid campaigns and scores of smaller ones directed at Central American countries. These alternative aid programs attempt to counter the U.S. military aid given to right-wing regimes and the covert aid given to the *contras* fighting to overthrow the Nicaraguan government. Although designed to provide desperately needed food and supplies, most programs also have an educational and organizing impact that ensures

that the donations are more than just charitable contributions.

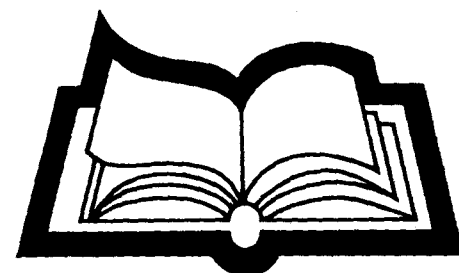
One of the largest programs—Tools for Peace—is organized by Oxfam-America, a Boston-based international development and relief organization. The goal of Tools for Peace is to raise \$250,000 in agricultural, medical and educational equipment—enough to fill a ship bound for Nicaragua from San Francisco in late May.

The professional and political groups involved in the Oxfam campaign are responsible for raising money and materials. Oxfam is responsible for the safe voyage of the "American Express" and for ensuring that the donations make it into the

State Department opposes "feeding and caring for those who are out to commit inhumane acts," says spokeswoman Anita Stockman, the possibility of a future crack-down on Central America-bound aid is not out of the question.

Ironically, the U.S. government does provide some indirect humanitarian aid to Nicaragua. It reimburses AFSC for shipping costs in order to boost U.S. shipping. This inadvertent aid may also end if the World War I-era "Trade with the Enemy Act" is tightened once again.

Oxfam's loading of the American Express will be given a large and visible send-off so



hands of the Nicaraguan groups that will distribute them.

The professional groups usually raise money for materials that are indispensable for their work at home. The Central American Health Rights Network East and the Committee for Health Rights in Central America (CHRC) are collecting money and medical supplies to fortify Nicaragua's fast-draining medical resources and to build a reserve for emergency use.

CHRC has also exchanged medical personnel and taught medical students in Nicaragua in the past few years.

The American Friends Service Committee, with a 67-year tradition of providing emergency aid to battle-torn countries, is raising money for pencils, paper and other school supplies for a successful continuation of Nicaragua's literacy campaign. In addition to school supplies, AFSC will focus shipments of food on the people displaced by *contra* fighting on the Nicaraguan-Honduran border.

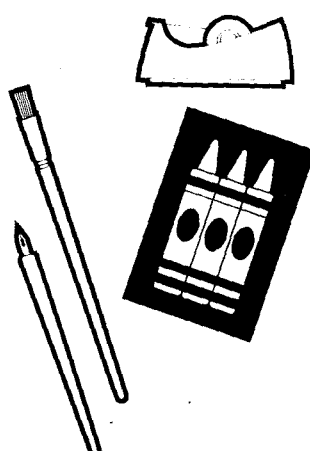
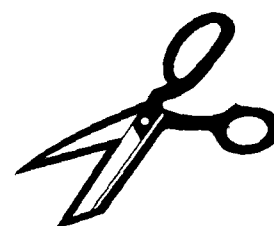
One northern California group is planning to buy a tractor. A Berkeley car mechanic is asking fellow mechanics to scavenge carburetors, tires, engines and other used parts for Nicaraguan use.

The private agencies and individuals involved in these people-to-people campaigns have had surprisingly few problems with U.S. government interference. The State Department has clamped tight restrictions on aid to other "enemy" nations—23 designated ones, all Communist countries in Eastern Europe and Asia. Because the

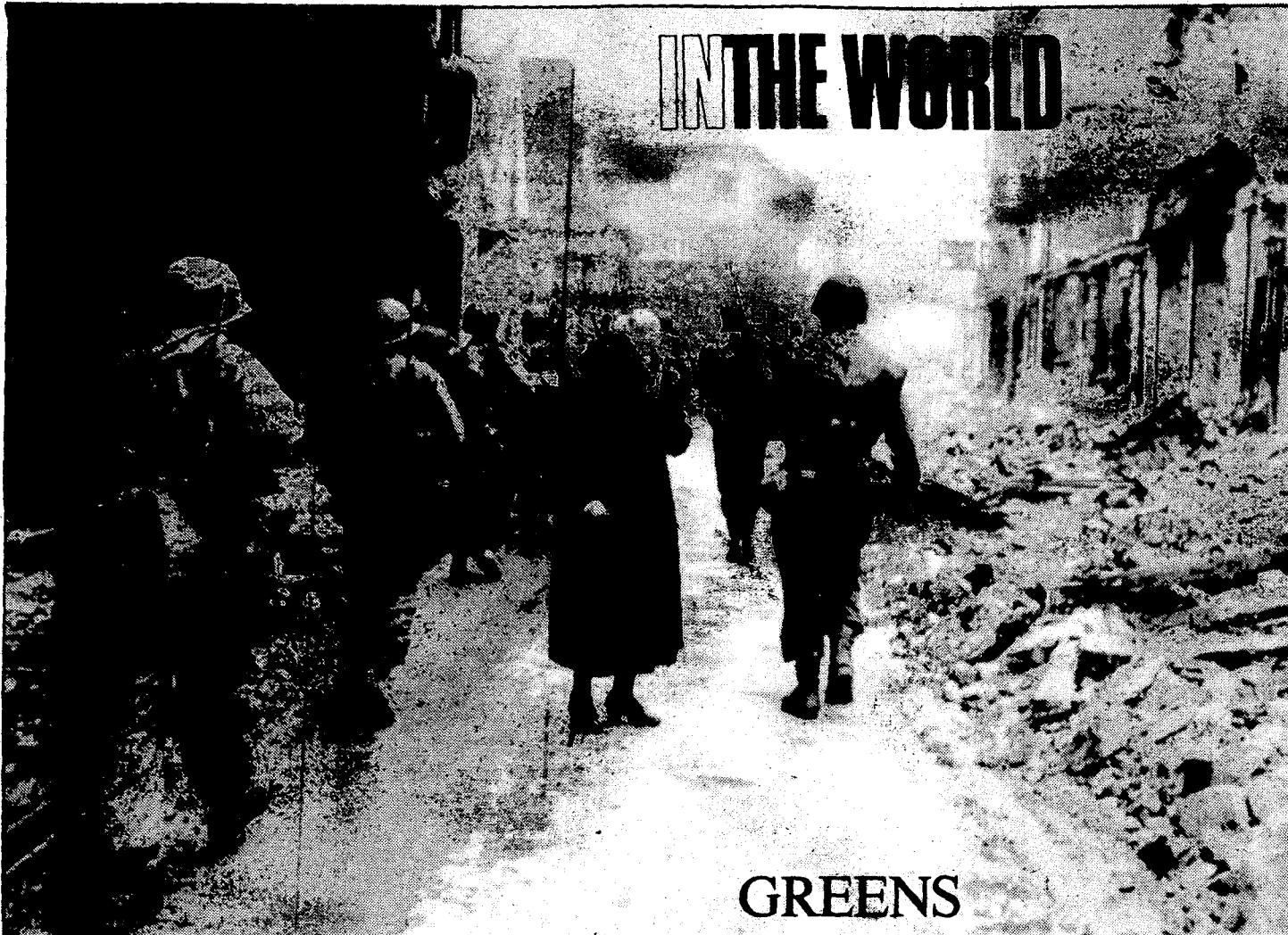
that opposition to U.S. policy in Central America will be clear. A late April celebration in Boston will mark the transporting of goods from the east to the west coast. On May 13, Oxfam and the Friends of Nicaraguan Culture will sponsor "Breaking the Blockade with Tools for Peace," a parade with music, dancing, jugglers and clowns beginning at San Francisco's Civic Center.

For more information on the Oxfam campaign, contact Oxfam America, 115 Broadway, Boston, Mass. 02116. (617) 482-1211.

—Patty Somlo



IN THE WORLD



A German woman stands between advancing U.S. troops in Bensheim, Germany, in March 1945.

for Germany to play a different role in their world scheme.

The boldest expression of these fears was an article in the February issue of *Psychologie Heute* by Peter Rubeau, 40, and Wolfgang Westermann, 36. They maintain that economic and power interests are inadequate to explain such irrational behavior as agreeing to station nuclear weapons that could annihilate the German nation.

They argue that the German generation responsible for the horrendous crimes of Nazism, spared by the Americans, became fully dependent and bound by gratitude—and by fear of the incriminating evidence against them in American files. The guilty were not punished. Even men like Klaus Barbie were protected.

Identification with the victors made possible "the splitting off of one's own guilt and its eventual projection onto the enemy image, made legitimate by the Americans, of the communist Russians," Rubeau and Westermann wrote. "While the U.S. population suddenly had to adjust to seeing former allies as the new arch enemies, as Nazis, the Germans had already been officially required to hate the Russians. In this regard, the ground was better prepared for the freshly-baked democrats. Now it was a national duty to project everything evil and guilty onto the Russians."

This made it impossible for the guilty generation to see any difference between German and American interests, or to grasp what it meant "that our 'friend' all this time has not made a peace treaty with us, but keeps us living in a state of truce." Remorse has been blocked, leaving an unfulfilled need for punishment and authentic atonement. For the two psychoanalysts, this explains why Bonn politicians asked the Americans to station nuclear missiles in Germany.

As for the other side, Rubeau and Westermann wonder: "After two world wars started by Germany and after the merciless murder of six million Jews, might there still perhaps be surviving victims who can long—even unconsciously—for revenge against the Germans?" They note that the inventor of the neutron bomb, Samuel Cohen, has said plainly that it was designed for Germany.

They suggest that subconscious hatred and revenge fantasies, such as exist in all human beings, could drive people in positions of power to favor strategies that could avenge the victims of Nazism by causing a nuclear holocaust that would exterminate the Germans as the Germans tried to exterminate the Jews. Just as German Jews could not believe what Hitler had in store for them, Rubeau and Westermann note that Germans are not defending themselves. The text of their article was distributed at the conference.

Dirk Schneider, a Bundestag member from the Berlin Green-Alternative list, came to Karlsruhe to argue against the ideas being promoted at the conference. A peace treaty was an abstract demand with no public appeal, he said. Did anyone doubt that the day after a peace treaty was signed, the Federal Republic would rejoin NATO? Most West Germans were in favor of NATO, he observed.

Schneider complained that the Greens had no analysis of the Soviet system, no concept of the East beyond a place that represses peace groups. By insisting on trying to demonstrate in East Berlin in solidarity with non-governmental peace groups, the Greens are now barred from entering East Germany at a time when relations between the two Germanies are otherwise picking up. Schneider said the Greens were thus left with no practical policy toward relations between the two Germanies.

Instead, Schneider believes the Greens should stick to the practical problems that people are concerned about: the danger of war, jobs and the dying forests. Judging by past historical experience, nationalism is unlikely to become a major force unless and until there is mass frustration over failure to solve such basic problems as these.

By Diana Johnstone

B O N N

THE LAND BELONGS TO THE French and the Russians, Britain rules the sea, but the Germans are undisputed masters of the airy realm of dreams, wrote the poet Heinrich Heine 140 years ago. In the history of the German dreamland, March 10, 1984, may be a date to record. On that evening in Karlsruhe, a packed concert hall timidly joined in singing for the first time an imaginary national anthem for an imaginary reunified Germany.

Political cabaret singer Wolf Biermann, thrown out of East Germany in 1976, created the mood for the event and taught the mostly young audience the words. The concert was the high point of a regional conference on "German policy" organized by the Green Party of the southwestern state of Baden-Württemberg. "German policy" is a Pandora's box of questions relating to Germany's status as a divided nation under foreign occupation.

Biermann set the mood by circling warily around the delicate subject at hand. Only at the end did he get around to the point: "I believe the German question is ahead of us, not behind us," Biermann said. He wants a reunified Germany unlike either the Federal Republic or the Democratic Republic, but "socialist" in a way that he admitted was hard to define.

If such nonsense as a national anthem would be needed, he suggested the "Children's Anthem" with words by Bertolt Brecht and music by Hans Eisler, who also wrote the music for East Germany's anthem. The song wishes for "a good Germany like any other country," for a day when people do not "turn pale" at the name of "German" but stretch out their hands in friendship.

Alluding to "Deutschland Über Alles," Brecht's words longed for the day when Germany would want to be "neither over nor under" anybody else. Biermann commented that Brecht had foreseen a German left that, out of shame for the Nazi ambition to be "over," wanted to be "under" everybody—"and that's just as bad," he said.

"I like a national anthem that can be sung softly," he concluded, singing softly.

The discussion was far less harmonious. The Baden-Württemberg Greens (considered relatively conservative) seemed particularly eager to promote a campaign for a peace treaty to end Germany's status as an occupied territory. But hope for even minimal agreement was premature. Not even all 200 people at the debate were convinced of the need.

"When we demand no ABC [atomic,

Conference raises German question

biological, chemical] weapons, we run up against our bloc binding," said conference organizer Thomas Rauberger. "No German child in school learns the real history of the two German states. We must get to the root of the problem: this is an occupied country. We must organize to demand a peace treaty. I want to be able to decide what alliance I belong to. My utopia is a neutral federal republic, like Sweden and Austria."

The discussion went round and round. A young woman said she feared the treaty demand would be understood as nationalist.

"We're the only people in Europe who are shy about mentioning our own interests," someone retorted. "No Frenchman or Pole ever hesitates to promote his national interests."

"We welcome any way to call the German question by another name," said another. "We must ask ourselves what drives us to talk about 'nuclear-free zones' but never mention Germany."

A woman from the "middle" generation said she didn't consider it nationalistic to discuss "the specific contribution each people can make to peace." She said she was bound to feel more concerned about East Germany than about France since she was born there and had relatives there.

"This is psychotherapy," a young man said. "Once we say to ourselves, 'We are German,' we can say it to others."

Promises, promises.

Some explosive information had been dug up and mimeographed and was lying around on tables in thick documentation packets. It included texts of treaties establishing Germany's post-war status, notably the "German Treaty" of May 26, 1952, in which the Three Powers (the U.S., Britain and France) granted Bonn the powers of a sovereign state, but retained their "rights and responsibilities regarding Berlin and Germany as a whole including reunification of Germany and a peace treaty settlement." The Three Powers retained their rights to station armed forces in the Federal Republic. "The task of these armed forces will be the defense of the Free World, to which the Federal Republic and Berlin belong." The Federal Republic promised to contribute to "achieving the common goals of the Free World."

The failure of the mass protest movement to stop deployment of Pershing II and Cruise nuclear missiles has brought out the fact that the Federal Republic is not fully sovereign. Some argued that even if the Bundestag had voted against missile deployment last November, the U.S. would still have stationed the missiles.

It is sometimes said these days that German youth are too young to remember Hitler's crimes. But some young Germans considered "anti-American" often condemn Hitler's crimes more strongly than their parents or grandparents who were around at the time. What the young do not remember is the humiliation of defeat—the cold, the hunger, the uncertainty. That's the blank part.

Germans now in their 20s grew up as part of the "Free World," with a living standard like California's. But because their anti-missile protests were unheeded, they are now finding that they are free only to be a bastion of the Free World.

The first American impulse was to

Some Green Party members dream of the day when the two Germanies will be reunited.

punish Nazi Germany for its crimes. The Morgenthau Plan would have torn down industry and turned Germany into a pasture. The Russians were more interested in collecting reparations. But the American economy emerged from the war with an excess of capital and productive capacity. It had to expand or risk renewed depression. By way of the Marshall Plan, excess capital was pumped into ruined Western Europe to enlarge the market for American production. This project was incompatible with Russian interests. So Europe and Germany were divided. Instead of being punished for the crimes of Nazism, West Germans were enjoined to get rich and enjoy freedom, which they did.

The nuclear missile deployment has aroused fears that the American masters may have decided that the time has come

Arbeitszeit verkürzen heißt Arbeitsplätze schaffen!



By Diana Johnstone

LABOR

B O N N

EIGHT SHINY ROBOTS PARADED through the old industrial Ruhr town of Gelsenkirchen on March 22, handing out flyers. "Dear human being," the text read, "We work 10 times as much as you. We never get tired or sick, demand wages or go on holiday. We want your job, so please give us your name, address and job."

The parade was one of hundreds of metal workers union actions throughout West Germany for the 35-hour work week, a campaign designed to create, or at least save, jobs.

Metal workers—members of IG Metall—dressed as robots took off their square metallic heads to talk to people in the street. "Every time a new robot is brought into our factory, four, five or six colleagues become redundant," one explained. The message got across easily in Gelsenkirchen, with more than 16 percent unemployed.

IG Metall, with some 2.5 million members, is the largest single trade union in the Western world. It has thrown all its forces into the battle for the 35-hour week. It is fighting, with its back to the wall, against a management that seems determined to inflict an historic defeat on the labor movement. The best hope of IG Metall leaders themselves is apparently that the "more progressive and enlightened" sector of management will, as it has in the past, see the advantages of maintaining social peace and therefore impose a compromise on sectors of industry that want to break the unions. A defeat for IG Metall would be the most devastating in a series of defeats suffered by the European labor movement in recent years.

A test of strength between IG Metall and the industrialists' confederation Gesamtmetall has been shaping up since the last contract negotiations five years ago: IG Metall agreed then not to challenge the 40-hour week for the duration of the contract, which ran out last December. In exchange, metal workers got a sixth week of annual paid vacation and shorter hours for night and swing shift workers.

The last five years have weakened the union. Membership is not renewing itself in the depressed steel and shipbuilding industries. Last January, the number of West Germans officially unemployed reached a new seasonal peak of 2.5 million, and this ignores a million women and young people just out of school who would work if they could. IG Metall warns that by 1990 six million will be out of work—the fatal figure that brought Hitler to power 50 years ago.

IG Metall argues that economic growth won't cure unemployment, as conservatives claim. "For growth to overcome

Unions battle for a shorter week

unemployment, we would need a yearly growth rate of 6 to 8 percent. Economically, that is utopian. For the environment, a catastrophe." It is significant that the union accepts environmental arguments against eternal growth.

Nor do exports offer a solution. For years, German goods have done as well as could be hoped on a world market that offers narrowing prospects for exports. Industrialization in some Third World countries has crowded the world market, and many client countries are going broke or bankrupt. Foreign markets won't create new jobs in Germany, IG Metall warns.

German capital realizes this, and has practically stopped investing in industrial expansion. There is no shortage of capital, but simply no prospect of selling expanded production. IG Metall notes that the percentage of profits invested in industry has dropped from 72 percent in 1965 to 50 percent in 1980 to 31 percent in 1982, while profits continued to rise. And three quarters of that dwindling investment is spent not to increase production but to cut costs—especially labor costs. In short, economic recovery today means more profit and fewer jobs.

Thus the only way to prevent mass unemployment is to share the remaining work. The 35-hour week is a first step, IG Metall concludes.

In the past month, more than 300,000

The unions argue that the only way to prevent eventual mass unemployment is to share the remaining work.

employees of some thousand companies took part in hour-long "warning strikes." During the hour, union members took their message to the streets, using their imaginations as in the robot parade. Five other unions are also demanding the 35-hour week: printers, postal workers, wood and plastic workers, education and scientific workers and the commerce, banking and insurance employees union. The Social Democratic Party (SPD) has thrown its weight behind the 35-hours campaign, which has also won backing from churches alarmed at the human cost of unemployment. The Green Party supports the unions, while stressing that only a thorough reorganization of work can solve the problem.

Stiff resistance.

Resistance has been ferocious. Breaking with a tradition of government neutrality in collective bargaining, Chancellor Helmut Kohl has called 35 hours a "silly and dumb" idea, and Christian Democratic government spokesman Heiner Geissler has accused "university-educated" IG Metall officials of trying to force a "new class struggle" on a reluctant rank and file. Industrial management flatly refuses to discuss 35 hours with union representatives. Instead, it has used the media to argue that "the 35-hour week with equal pay" would ruin German industry and destroy those jobs that are still left.

After 70 regional bargaining sessions ended in deadlock, leaders of IG Metall and Gesamtmetall met on April 6 for "summit talks." IG Metall leaders Hans Mayr and especially Franz Steinkuhler, the young second-in-command who stands as the main champion of the 35 hours, stressed their willingness to compromise.

Management has made no concessions. Normally, at this point the union would call for a strike vote. But instead they have warily called for more talks, because industry leaders seem to want IG Metall to start a fight it would lose.

The reason for this is that recent polls indicate a drop in popular support for a 35-hour week from 39 percent, when the campaign began in October, to 25 percent in late February. Even among union members, support has dropped from 53 percent to 31 percent. So the situation is full of dangers for the union. If the membership says no—and only 25 percent is enough to do that under German law—

Union members have taken their message to the streets.

this would appear as a disavowal of the leadership and the campaign, and a victory for tough bosses.

Alarmists predict that a strike could be long and bitter and mark the end of West Germany's long-standing social peace. IG Metall officials, however, believe a strike could lead to compromise. They point out that key employers, such as the German auto industry, have large orders to fill and will want a settlement. BMW has already instituted a 36-hour week on its own—but it includes work on Saturdays and odd-hour shifts.

The strongest opposition comes from medium-sized firms where management is traditionally most hostile to unions. Although IG Metall denies this, independent journals report that workers are themselves increasingly divided over 35 hours, with opposition growing on the issue of overtime among employees of medium-sized companies.

Kurt Gaspar, a long-time shop steward at the Standard Kessel boiler factory in Duisburg, explained that initially most of his company's 550 employees seemed to favor the union proposal as a response to unemployment. But everything changed when they realized that limiting overtime is a necessary part of the proposal. Otherwise, management would just fill up the five freed work hours with overtime instead of hiring new employees. But workers at Standard Kessel are used to earning as much as a fourth of their wages (which are low—about \$10,000 a year for a qualified worker) in overtime. If you threaten their overtime, said Gaspar, "there is no argument that can convince them. They are ready to mount the barricades if you touch their standard of living."

That is the reflex unions have counted on in past battles, but now it may turn against them. Gaspar defended the 35 hours at Standard Kessel because he believes the union has a social responsibility to do something about unemployment. He told his colleagues that it was in their own long-term interest, since they could find themselves out of work one day. "But unfortunately, most won't think that far ahead," he admitted. Gaspar was opposed in shop elections by someone who campaigned on the slogan, "To hell with the unemployed, we want our overtime." Although his own years of service were appreciated and his opponent was only half serious, Gaspar lost.

In big factories, the situation is different. Overtime has been largely eliminated, and the union campaign is popular. But even there, many employees fear compromise agreements will be used by management to speed up rationalization rather than to create jobs. The 40-hour week is, in fact, already being broken up—or down—by management as it rationalizes and automates production and fits part-

Continued on following page

Jesse

Continued from page 2

viability of a left-wing coalition rested on the Jackson candidacy. Green also contended that Jackson was not anti-Semitic because "anti-Semites intend derogation and do not apologize for it." Green's praise of Jackson prompted a reply from Paul Berman. Pointing to Jackson's reference to alleged Jewish control of media, the banks and labor, and his "Hymie" statement, Berman rejected Green's "whoops—I'm sorry" defense of Jackson's view of Jews. He also denied that Jackson's movement was a contribution to the left. Using a theory of populism borrowed from the consensus historians of the '50s, Berman charged that Jackson was a "traditional populist" whose views mingled "extreme rightist ideas" with "left-wing proposals."

It seems to me that Berman is correct in expressing concern about Jackson's

anti-Semitism, just as any journalist or fair-minded person should be concerned about Jackson's refusal to send Farrakhan packing for his threats to Coleman, his warnings to American Jews and his praise of Hitler. But Jackson seems neither the deranged populist of Berman's conception nor the conventional leftist of Commoner and Green's view. Contrary to Berman's tendentious use of the term, neither George Wallace nor William Jennings Bryan was a populist. Populism was a movement of white and black small farmers determined to resist what they saw to be the attempt of banks and railroads to destroy them. It was America's left-wing petit-bourgeois movement, bent upon restoring the Jeffersonian dream. And it was destroyed by Democratic racists in the South and free-silverites in the West.

Jackson's economic views are a mixture of New Deal liberalism and ethnic nationalism. He wants to advance black people to the point where they can compete equally with the Irish, the Jews and the WASPs. ("Our share, not welfare.") He doesn't believe that all blacks should

be small farmers and businesspeople, but he does think that the blacks should have their own bourgeoisie. Thus he owes far more to Booker T. Washington than to Sockless Jerry Simpson. Jackson also shares the traditional Democrat's concern for workers: the poor and the labor movement (his anti-labor statements have been entirely directed at the AFL-CIO hierarchy, not the movement itself). He advocates a form of industrial policy (making tax subsidies dependent upon corporate good behavior) very similar to that of Mondale. His most pronounced "left-wing" views are in foreign-rather than domestic policy, where he draws on the positions of Rep. Ron Dellums, the Institute for Policy Studies and the view of Third World solidarity that emerged in the '60s black movement.

Jackson has made opposition to the second primary (runoff) system in the South the issue in determining whether he will support the Democratic nominee in November. According to this system, if no Democrat secures 50 percent in a primary, there is a runoff between the two top candidates. The system, which reflects the one-party South, has discouraged black races for Congress. Jackson and others blame it directly for the 1982 defeat of black Democrat H.M. Michaux in North Carolina's second congressional district. Michaux led in the first primary with 44 percent of the vote, but was defeated in the runoff by his white opponent, who went on to win the election. Yet some white Southern liberals argue that the second primary preserves the Democratic Party as a multi-racial party. They point to the runoff victories of South Carolina Richard Riley and Mississippi Gov. William Winter, both civil rights advocates who trailed in the first primary. And they warn that the elimination of second primaries will only benefit the Republican Party.

By making the second primary his principal demand, Jackson seems to be making the achievement of black ethnic equality his primary objective. In this respect, he is carrying on the legacy of Booker T. Washington and Martin Luther King rather than that of Eugene Debs or Huey Long.

Labor

Continued from page 7

time employees into odd niches here and there. But they do not earn full pay, and, perhaps even more important, management totally controls their work schedules.

Management's determination to hold on to its power to organize work is probably the main reason for its resistance to the 35-hour demand. IGMetall officials say that after the 35 hours, the next important issue will be the "shaping" of work. The union wants to have its say, and a victory in the 35-hour battle would put it in a strong position to demand a measure of employee control in work organization.

Also at stake is the union's role as representative of the working class as a whole. The 35 hours is clearly a "class" demand that goes beyond membership to the overall interest of working people (and all of society). A defeat for the IGMetall campaign could reduce the unions to their "corporatist" role as defenders of special interests. Seen as selfish by society, the unions would be unable to mount a political challenge to business leadership in economic and social affairs.

A victory, on the other hand, could be a first step toward construction of a new social model of work and production. Here Green ideas would have a major contribution to make.

Otherwise, what is to become of millions of unemployed Germans? In early April, conservative American columnist William Safire had an idea. "In the coming decade," he predicted, "West Germany (politically weak, economically strong and with a pool of military manpower) and France (politically strong, economically debilitated, with its *force de frappe*) will form a new axis of power." Young Germans may think they are part of a peace movement, but for far-sighted conservative circles in Washington they are already "a pool of military manpower."


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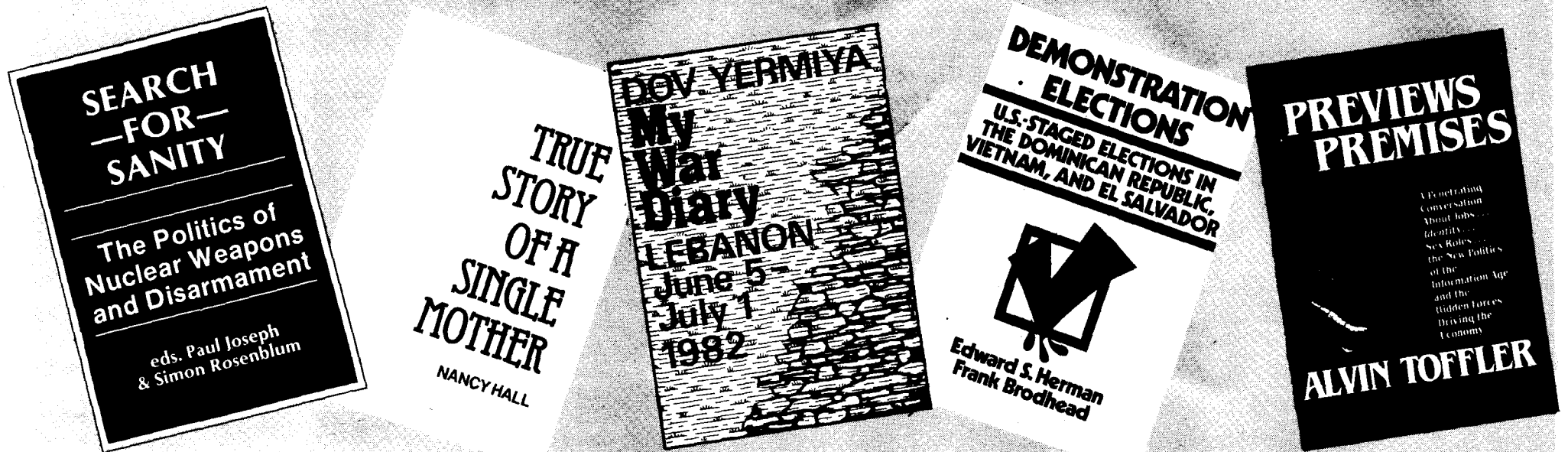
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INTERNATIONAL

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Edward S. Herman

Continuing his powerful attack on US foreign policy, Edward Herman, together with co-author Frank Brodhead, analyzes the nature and legitimacy of US sponsored elections in the Third World. Herman and Brodhead employ a six-point standard as a way of measuring exactly how democratic the election processes actually were. Finding none of the conditions met in any of the cases under investigation, they conclude that these so-called "free" and "fair" elections are, in fact, gigantic public relations campaigns used to demonstrate to the US public that the governments we support are also supported by their own people.

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264pp.

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DISARMAMENT

SEARCH FOR SANITY The Politics of Nuclear Weapons and Disarmament

edited by Paul Joseph and Simon
Rosenblum

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400pp.

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MY WAR DIARY Lebanon, June 5—July 1, 1982 Dov Yermiya

A passionately humane eyewitness account of the effects of the Israeli invasion on the civilian population of Lebanon. The author, a Lieutenant Colonel in the Israeli Defense Forces, was assigned to civilian relief in the wake of the invasion. He describes both the devastation caused by military action and the attitudes and behavior of the Israelis towards their victims.

This is a deeply felt personal response to the prejudice, bureaucratic obstruction, and petty and not-so-petty cruelty perpetrated in the name of Israeli security. It is also a record of genuine attempts by individuals, both Israeli and Lebanese, to find grounds for mutual respect and for peace.

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WOMEN

A TRUE STORY OF A SINGLE MOTHER

Nancy Lee Hall

With no support, financial or emotional, from her ex-husband, Nancy Lee Hall, a sober alcoholic, raised seven children. In a simple and straight-forward style, Hall recounts her family's tale of determination, optimism, love and courage, in the face of unemployment, poverty and violence. She also tells the story of her personal journey out of isolation as an unemployed mother dependent on occasional, inadequate child-support checks, to supporting her family through work outside the home, and her discovery of the women's liberation movement. During all of this, no matter what else was happening in her life, and with little encouragement, she continued to write.

The first volume of Hall's autobiography, *A True Story of a Drunken Mother*, was published by Daughters, Inc. in 1974. This second volume is an inspiring addition to the growing literature about the realities of women's lives.

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ECONOMICS

HAZARDOUS TO OUR WEALTH: Economic Policy in the 1980s Frank Ackerman

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He goes on to look at the programs put forward by the proponents of economic democracy, and concludes by offering his own critique and presenting a long term strategy for the implementation of a radical economic policy.

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Alan Wolfe

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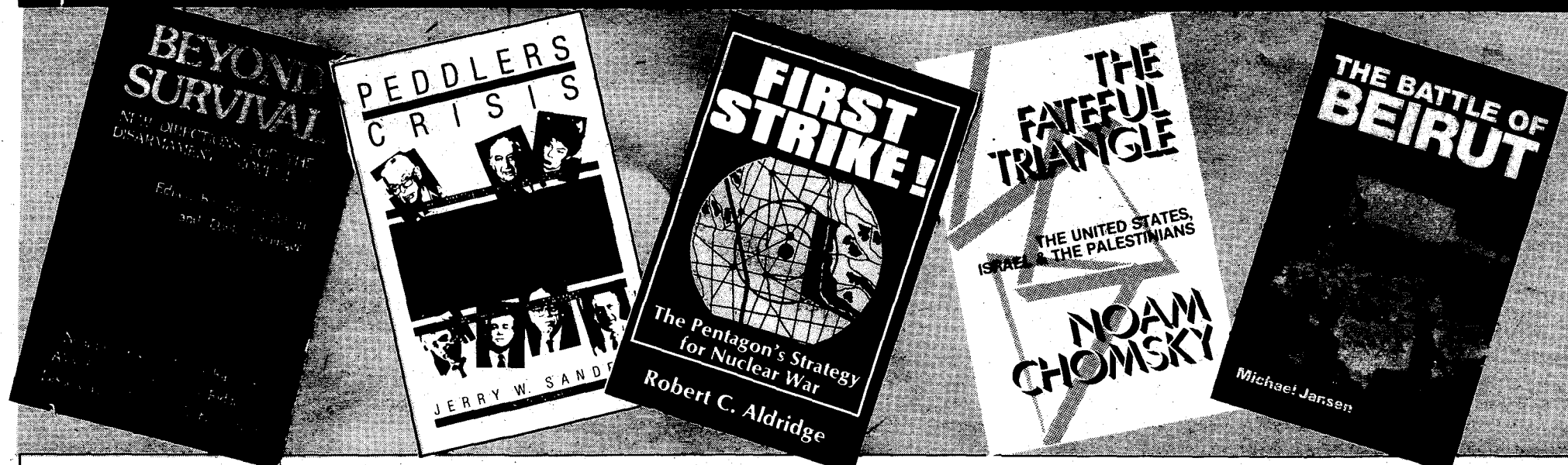
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HONDURAS

U.S. role in barracks coup unclear

By Beth Stephens

TEGUCIGALPA, HONDURAS

AT 11:30 A.M. SATURDAY, March 31, under orders of the Honduran armed forces, every radio station in Honduras suddenly suspended programming and joined a national grid controlled by the military. For almost an hour, military music was broadcast while people waited for an explanation and rumors of a coup d'état or war with Nicaragua spread. The answer, when it finally arrived, was shocking: Gen. Gustavo Alvarez, chief of the armed forces, often described as the strong man behind civilian President Roberto Suazo Cordova, had resigned and left the country.

Three more terse communiques interrupted the martial music, announcing that three of Alvarez's top four generals had resigned and Suazo Cordova had taken personal control of the armed forces. By the end of the week, 16 top military officers had "retired" or been sent into "diplomatic exile" as military attaches. The only top-ranking general to survive the purge, air force chief Walter Lopez, was named head of the armed forces, and a dozen younger officers were promoted to fill the vacancies.

For days after the stunning "resignations," communiques and public statements from military officials and politicians were scrutinized for an explanation of the nation's most powerful man's resignation. Sworn in as military chief in January of 1982, Alvarez had maintained

Some speculate that the Reagan administration decided that Gen. Alvarez would be a political liability as the American electoral campaign heats up.

a tight grip on the country's domestic and foreign policies. In his role as "messiah of anti-Communism," explains Congress member Jorge Arturo Reina, leader of a dissident wing of the ruling liberal party, Alvarez had "turned the country into a military base for Central American counterrevolution" and unleashed a wave of terror against left forces within Honduras, including murder, mass arrests, torture and some hundred political disappearances. Less than a week before his ouster, Alvarez' security police arrested more than a thousand members of the electrical workers union, who were striking to protest the disappearance of union president Rolando Vindel. Although the strikers were eventually released, Vindel is still missing and charges of subversion remain pending against union leaders.

Alvarez' downfall was initially hailed as a triumph of civilian rule over the military and of policies of moderation and peace over those of oppression and war-mongering. First it was claimed that a civilian president had asserted control over the armed forces.

But within a few days, the bubble of constitutional propriety had burst, and the true sequence of events became public: in a "barracks coup" 20 younger officers, lead by Walter Lopez, had deposed Alvarez and his top assistants. The

president, who apparently learned of the move only after Alvarez was on his way out of the country, was reportedly told to endorse the move or leave the country too. He joined in, as did the National Congress, which quickly accepted Alvarez' "resignation" and approved Lopez as his replacement.

No democratic reform.

Far from a triumph of democracy and constitutional rule, the "barracks coup" demonstrated the dominance of the military over the civilian government, according to Efraim Diaz, the lone Christian Democrat represented in the 82-member Congress. Political observers generally agree that the armed forces, which governed the country for 17 years before Suazo Cordova assumed the presidency two years ago, have been the true power in the country all along. Says Jorge Arturo Reina, "The people of Honduras voted for Suazo Cordova in protest, for a change" in military rule, but he gave control of the country back to Alvarez and to the U.S. The result has been military rule behind a facade of democracy. "If American troops are here to defend democracy, they're not doing it," says Ramone Custodio, head of the Honduran Civil Rights Commission. "Honduras is not at all a democracy."

The initial military uprising stemmed from growing resentment against Alvarez from younger officers being excluded from power. As Alvarez grew steadily richer and more powerful, he began to push aside other officers, delaying promotions and threatening dismissals. The ease with which the seemingly all-powerful Alvarez was tossed out derives from the near-unanimity of the middle-rank officers who lead the country's army battalions, the military might of the armed forces. One report said that Alvarez found himself with only the support of the police and the navy—far too little to oppose a rebellion by the army.

His ouster was made even smoother by the increased animosity toward him that surfaced after his departure. Criticized as arrogant, meddling and repressive, often by people who had nothing bad to say about him during his years in power, a whole chain of "unidentified sources" are charging him with everything ranging from theft of \$30 million (probably exaggerated, although the \$1 million worth of homes he built on his \$25,000 yearly salary indicates some pilfering) to ordering secret inspections of his subordinates.

The role played in the coup by the U.S. remains unclear. Ambassador John Negroponte asserted that the U.S. had no prior knowledge, and praised the move as one that would strengthen Honduran democracy. But in Honduras, "the public always assumes that the U.S. embassy is close behind this kind of event," as the newspaper *El Tiempo* put it, so people find Negroponte's claims of innocence hard to credit. "Every decision of the Honduran government is checked first with the U.S. embassy here," says Raul Velasquez, director of the Independent Institute for Socioeconomic Research.

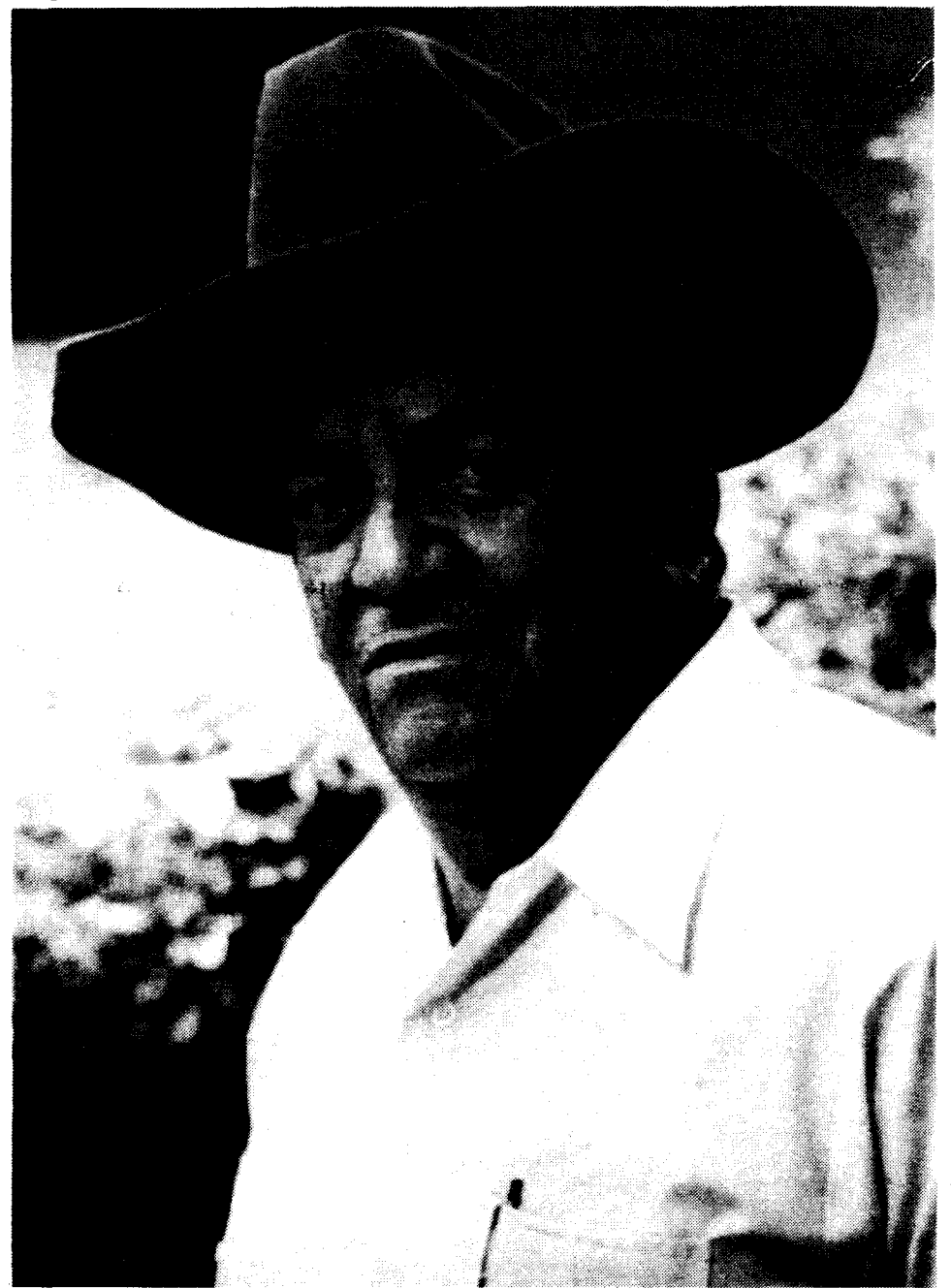
What did the U.S. know?

It seems inconceivable that Alvarez would have left the country without first asking whether the U.S. would back him. An enthusiastic supporter of the Reagan administration's view of the region as a battle ground in the war between the superpowers, he presided over an amazing spurt of U.S. involvement in Honduras that now includes thousands of Americans constructing airfields (a total of seven have been improved or constructed in the last year), radar stations and storage facilities, observation flights over El Salvador and the Nicaraguan border and military exercises involving 5,500 American soldiers. (At times the "exercises"

and the construction projects were curiously intertwined: according to Ambassador Negroponte, the *Grenadero I* exercises that began this month will enable U.S. troops to "practice building combat airstrips" along the Nicaraguan and Salvadoran borders). Alvarez is also a violent anti-Sandinista, who has said that Honduras cannot live in peace with revolutionary Nicaragua and has called on the U.S. to invade Nicaragua.

Although a detailed explanation of why the U.S. would have plotted against such a loyal ally has not surfaced, unnamed sources have been quoted as saying that Alvarez had become uncontrollable, ruining the image of Honduran democracy that the U.S. was trying to project and threatening to act without consulting the embassy. With the Demo-

Honduran President Roberto Suazo Cordova was reportedly told to endorse the coup or leave the country.



crats attacking the Reagan administration for undermining democracy in Honduras, administration officials may have decided that Alvarez would be a political liability as the electoral campaign heats up. Certainly, U.S. officials have not shown the concern about possible changes in Honduran policies that might have been expected if the coup had come as a surprise. Within a few hours of the announcement of Alvarez' resignation, Negroponte said that he had been assured that Honduran policy would be unaffected by the move. A few days later, Gen. Paul Gorman, head of the U.S. Southern Command, had arrived from Panama. He emerged from meetings with the new military chief repeating the same assurances.

Liberal forces in Honduras, however, are using Alvarez' ouster and the democratic rhetoric that accompanied it as an opportunity to demand meaningful reforms. On April 5, just five days after the coup, 20,000 demonstrators took to the streets of Tegucigalpa demanding the return of the 105 disappeared, respect for

human rights (including the right to organize), departure of U.S. and Salvadoran troops and peace with Nicaragua. The departure of Alvarez and many of his allies "can begin a new epoch," a representative of the Committee of Families of the Disappeared told the crowd. Nevertheless, "we are not willing to lower our battle flags for simple hope of change: we want action." Noting that the oppressive state apparatus remains almost intact, he called for a major restructuring of the armed forces.

Politicians and leaders of grassroots organizations interviewed in the days following the coup shared his view. They see the government as having an opportunity to institute reforms—but are skeptical.

In the short term, however, while the new military structure consolidates its

power, a marked decrease in the repressive atmosphere may be in store. A change was already noticeable in the week following the coup. "The vigilance has eased up," said a Tegucigalpa resident whose house has been watched in the past. During the large demonstration, the only soldiers in sight were guarding a few government buildings. The security forces seen at past demonstrations, riding in tinted-glass vehicles without license plates, were completely absent.

Some exiles who fled the country in fear for their lives are talking of a possible return—quickly, while the relatively loose period lasts. Whether that period of calm lasts for a short while or broadens into a genuine opening for peaceful change in Honduras depends on the complex interactions between the new military leaders, the politicians, the popular organizations—and the ever-present influence of the United States.

Beth Stephens, a U.S. attorney living in Managua, was in Honduras during the "barracks coup."

Telecommuti

Sweatshop at home sweet home?

By Richard Moore
& Elizabeth Marsis

SOMEDAY SOON YOUR BOSS JUST might tell you to go home and never come back. What's more, he or she might even pay you while you're there—providing, of course, you do your work on a home computer and beam it in on time.

Telecommuting is the newest corporate fad, and increasing numbers of managers and workers are fascinated by its possibilities: no more insufferable commuter trains; no more bug-infested offices; no more dressing up. Work right in the cozy comfort of your den, linked by computer terminal and telephone to the outside world.

Is this dream too good to be true? Yes, says the AFL-CIO. Allow electronic home work, the Service Employees International Union (SEIU) argues, and the dream will turn into a nightmare of home-computer sweatshops, where women clericals labor for low wages without job security, health benefits or pension plans, and where home is once again a woman's proper domain. And so, armed with documented abuses and strongly worded resolutions, labor has set out to have telecommuting banned, creating one of the nation's fastest-growing and most heated labor-relations debates.

The controversy is urgent because telecommuting is an idea whose time has come. About 15,000 people participate in electronic home-work programs, and the U.S. Department of Labor predicts that the telecommuting population will encompass 10 million workers by 1990. If that expectation seems high—technical problems and managerial reluctance are slowing its introduction—an unmistakable trend nonetheless exists. At least 20 of the nation's largest companies—American Express, Rockwell International, New York Telephone—have established substantial home-work experiments, and most intend to turn their pilot projects into permanent programs. Countless more workers are unofficially encouraged to work at home, with major corporations like Honeywell offering computer discounts as an incentive.

Whatever the numbers, the trend is so significant that we must consider the implications of telecommuting and scrutinize labor's early call for its abolition. Could this work be regulated rather than banned? What are the implications of telecommuting for women workers? Does telecommuting possess some concrete advantages? If so, can rank-and-file workers enjoy them?

Foremost among labor's reasons for seeking a telecommuting ban is its belief that enforcement of labor regulations would be "absolutely impossible" in the home. Sweatshops would be an inevitable by-product. June McMahon, research director for SEIU, observes that other countries have failed to enforce such regulations. "In Canada," says McMahon, "there are licensing provisions for home work, but only one out of every three employers who employ home workers is licensed. That means two-thirds are in violation of the law. We believe the difficulty of reaching home workers and finding violations in Canada would be duplicated in the U.S."

Moreover, says McMahon, employers will aim their arrows at those least able to protect themselves. "The groups targeted for clerical computer home work are women, minorities, the handicapped and immigrants. These are the people who will be least able to fight back—the groups that are the most powerless now and traditionally."



Steve Cagan

ng:

For recession-bound corporations looking to save money and raise productivity, telecommuting offers a tempting way to squeeze labor costs. By treating employees as "independent contractors" rather than regular employees, corporations can shave pension, health and payroll-tax costs. And because companies substitute piece rates for salaries, workers often resort to unpaid overtime to achieve minimum quotas. The benefit to corporations has been a 15 percent average productivity increase in experimental home-work projects.

Blue Cross/Blue Shield of South Carolina is a classic electronic sweatshop employer whose tactics exemplify the kind of horror story that scares labor most. According to several published reports, the company pays clerical home workers piece rates, offers no paid vacations or benefits and charges \$2,400 a year in equipment-rental charges. Their "cottage keyers," as the workers are called, process more than 200 medical claims a day but net only about \$100 a week. "The prospect for protecting workers in such situations is dismal," concludes McMahon.

Still, specific instances of abuse do not prove that exploitation is inevitable, and some experts believe that regulations could be enforced. Donald Elisburg, President Carter's assistant secretary of labor for employment standards, claims that the Fair Labor Standards Act's "criterion of dependence" could prohibit most home clericals from being classified as independent contractors. If he's right, minimum wage and overtime laws would apply to clerical home workers, thereby preventing wage-and-hour discrimination against them. According to Elisburg, clerical home workers have already filed several lawsuits to determine their status, and at least one court has ruled that home typists are employees under the Act.

Corporate programs like those of Blue Cross/Blue Shield, with their eerie similarities to industrial home-work sweatshops, indicate a need for even stronger regulations. Courts might have to outlaw independent clerical contracting, and legislation requiring compensation comparable to that of office workers would be essential. Also needed would be requirements that software include automatic descriptions of workers' legal rights, as well as increased funding for the Department of Labor and OSHA. But none of these provisions would be impossible to obtain, particularly in a Democratic administration.

Moreover, electronic home work differs from industrial home work in ways that will surely alter the regulatory equation. Unlike small industrial producers, large corporations—the most likely users of telecommuting programs—will find it harder to escape the government's scrutiny. In addition, industrial home work only replicates factory jobs in workers' homes, while electronic home work involves new forms of corporate organization for everyone, from managers to clericals. And finally, the ranks of "powerless" clerical home workers will be composed primarily of educated working women, not immigrants handicapped by racism, language barriers or illegal status. Considering the rising number of home-worker cases in the courts, office workers' increasing knowledge of their rights and the decentralized flow of information from computers, labor's contention that enforcing labor regulations at home is "absolutely impossible" is not very persuasive.

Inextricably linked to economic concerns are the social and political implications of telecommuting for women. To proponents, telecommuting moves women toward total social equality—the beginning of a new family structure where men and women will work from their homes, sharing the rewards and responsibilities of a more flexible lifestyle. To opponents, electronic home work represents a reversal of decades of feminist struggle, a phenomenon that could leave women isolated and subservient. By tying women to their homes, they say, the microcomputer could ironically bring sex discrimination full circle.

Perhaps the most energetic and successful of all "new family" theorists is Mrs. Steve Shirley, who 20 years ago founded F International, a computer consulting and programming company that employs telecommuters almost exclusively. Shirley's company is one of the world's oldest electronic home-work employers. Last year F International's revenues totaled nearly \$10 million, and the company's equity is being transferred into a trust fund for what it considers a highly productive and loyal work force.

"I founded this company," says Shirley, "because I chose to raise a family and I also chose to have a career. How many women can do both? Telecommuting would provide that option and change the way the entire family interacts, how we organize our homes. By redistributing family life, it would make for a more involved, more humanistic family."

Shirley also sees telecommuting as a tool for community revitalization. "Communities have become dormitories almost—people commuting out on trains and in cars in the morning, leaving the very old and the very young behind, and then coming home just to sleep at night. Regular telecommuting would have a dramatic impact on community values, and would even affect our architecture in the way that work patterns have affected office architecture."

In interviews at F International and companies like New York Telephone, employees say they have more control over their lives and work more efficiently as a result.

Confirming those attitudes are studies that show productivity increases ranging from 15 percent at F International to more than 40 percent at New York Telephone. These programs do not closely monitor employees. Instead they allow self-supervision and avoid isolation by scheduling part-time hours in a central office.

But each of these splendid programs involves either managers or professionals, and telecommuting opponents maintain that progressively relocating work is a managerial prerogative that most women home workers will not have. The microcomputer could join a long list of technological developments—the type-

writer, the telephone, the sewing machine, the automobile—that have reinforced women's traditional social roles and preserved the separation of work spaces between men and women.

Work relocation should be seen in a social and economic context apart from the happy-go-lucky managers trying to liberate themselves from their offices. That context is the increasing need to alter work arrangements as economic necessity forces more and more married women to work. Indeed, the proportion of married households in which both husband and wife have worked full-time for five years now numbers 40 percent. This entry of married women, many with small children, into jobs traditionally held by young single females has irrevocably altered the economic landscape and forced a reassessment of the traditional industrial division between home, office and work.

In recent years working women have pressed for child-care programs to accommodate this change. While most companies have avoided implementing this demand, both the need and the demand have grown. Now, however, telecommuting could accommodate both women's need to work and corporations' desire to avoid footing the child-care bill. If women must work, managers may reason, we will make them work at home.

In managerial home-work experiments to date, salaries are high enough for parents to pay for child care, or both parents telecommute and can flexibly arrange their schedules. In clerical jobs where pay is lower and where only the mother may work at home, telecommuting without child care could have the stressful effect of two full-time jobs, isolating women in a world of VDT terminals and children. "Telecommuting," says Anne Nelson, director of Cornell University's Institute on Women and Work, "could leave the drudgery of work intact, but remove all that was pleasurable about work—seeing other people."

Don't cry—organize.

The truth about telecommuting lies somewhere between these two scenarios. It seems to possess both good and bad potential, depending on the worker's class. Clerical workers might share in its benefits, but not without collective bargaining to control and shape its use.

Could these workers be organized? Proponents of a telecommuting ban don't believe so. June McMahon of SEIU says, "Realistically, unions have never been able to organize single-unit shops. To send an organizer into one home to try and organize one worker is just too expensive. And low-wage workers would not be able to afford the software that might put them in touch with other workers through telecommunications. The isolation of workers and the expense would make organizing improbable."

Fortunately, telecommunication costs

are beginning to decline, giving hope that at least one barrier of isolation might break down. Data-base networks like the Business Computer Network are offering free software and reduced access charges to lure residential customers into their orbit. By hooking into such networks with their own service-oriented data bases, unions could establish channels of communication between computer workers that already exist on a small scale. At Control Data Corporation, for example, disabled telecommuters, many confined to rehabilitation centers, have formed an intensely close network, communicating regularly, playing computer chess and establishing a hotline for depressed workers.

Of course, telecommunication by itself could never overcome the isolation many telecommuters might feel. But the human need for social support may encourage spontaneous attempts at worker self-organization and community building. Indeed, these activities are already happening. At Control Data Corporation, employees have formed lunch outings to replace the socializing at the office. Some home workers have begun to socialize even more than when they worked in a central location. Nontraditional union organizing strategies on building community-based support systems could nourish this tendency.

Alternative organizing methods would allow labor not only to reach home workers, but also to organize industries—banks, insurance companies and other female-dominated fields—where telecommuting is expected to grow. Widespread electronic home work is still some years away, and unionizing potential home workers would decisively affect future experiments.

"Having a union presence before home-work programs are implemented is important," says Jeffrey Miller, associate director of public affairs for the Communication Workers of America. "Home work, of course, should always be a matter of worker choice. But with a union to guard that choice and to prevent exploitation, telecommuting could improve the quality of work and life."

Although they have no direct experience with home work, the CWA has experimented with alternative work sites within the Bell System, and workers have become happier and more productive.

While labor should pursue its concerns about electronic home work, an outright ban seems somewhat premature. Trying to deny technological change, rather than control its development and implementation, is sure to alienate thousands of workers who would like to test other ways of working.

Richard Moore and Elizabeth Marsis are New York-based writers. Moore has worked with the Retail Workers and Department Store Union, and Marsis has been a research associate with the International Ladies Garment Workers Union.

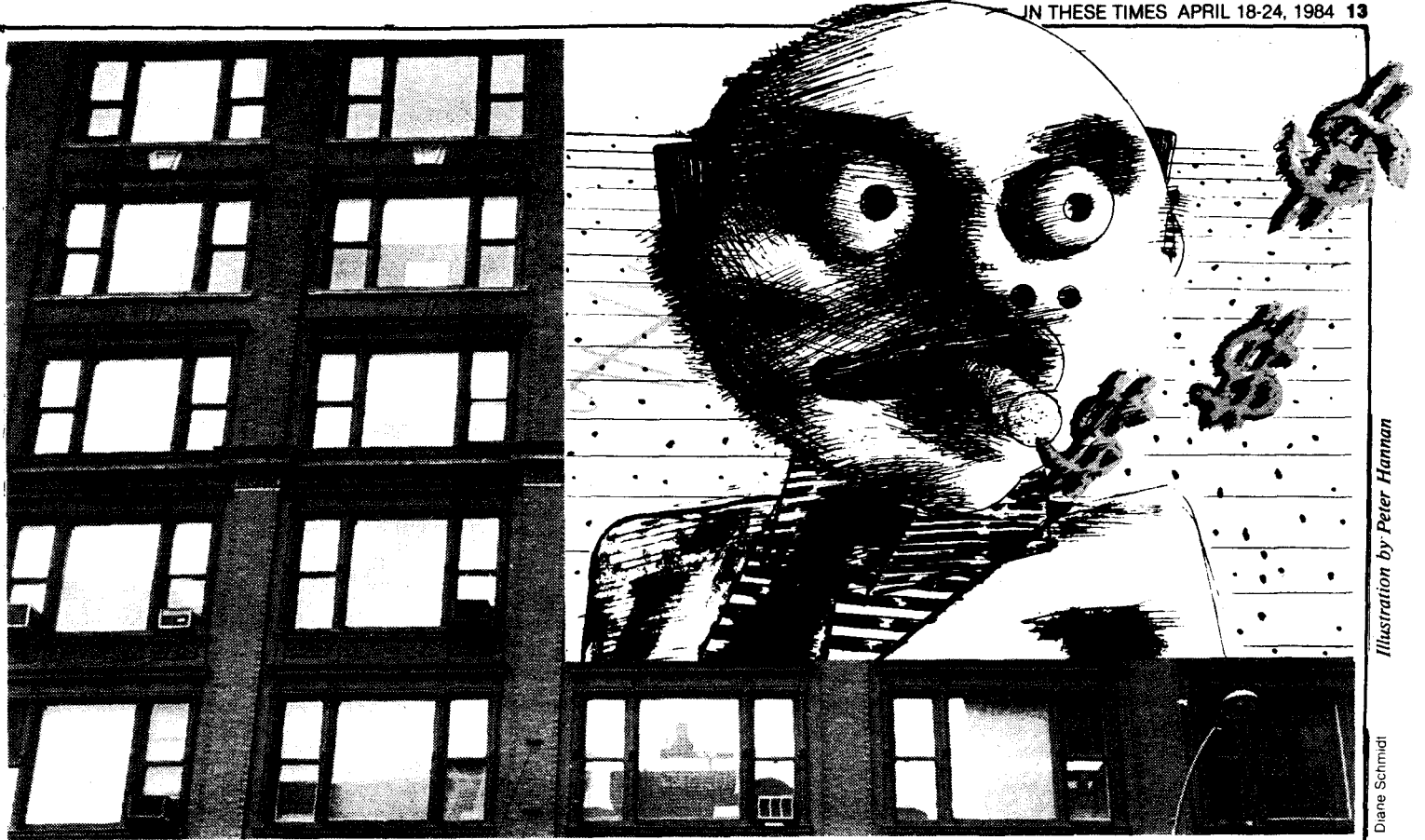


Illustration by Peter Hannan

Diane Schmidt

EDITORIAL



Jackson looked good debating Mondale and Hart.

Jackson without regard to the issues of military spending or foreign policy. A cynical view of all this would be that Jackson must thus distinguish himself from his two rivals if he hopes to win any white and Hispanic votes, and that he has nothing to lose among blacks by doing so.

We do not think Jackson is above such a maneuver. But that is beside the point. The significant fact is that the black community as a whole is a natural left constituency, one that has the least reason to be motivated by the same principles that motivate our corporate establishment and its political representatives in both parties. Both as a practical matter and as a matter of self-esteem, there is every reason for blacks to reject the basic principles of foreign and domestic policy of the current administration and of the Democratic Party establishment. As Jackson himself observes, "The black vote is the trigger for the progressive coalition and a peace agenda. The poorest people provide the base. The task now is for us to reach out so that we can transform the agenda of the Democratic Party."

In short, as we have said repeatedly over the past seven years, the key to a successful left politics in the United States is to enlarge the electorate by bringing blacks, women, Hispanics and working people into active participation. This is also Jackson's view.

Jackson and the Jews.

Jackson's relations with the Jewish community has brought out his worst side. His initial problems had to do with his stand on Palestinian rights on the West Bank. His positions that both Palestinians and Israelis must be guaranteed a homeland and that the PLO is the true representative of the Palestinian people were not anti-Israel. But his attitude was, and even if it had not been, his friendliness to Yasser Arafat was more than enough to make him anathema to the Israelis and to many American Jews, especially those in the Jewish establishment.

Already under attack from some Jewish organizations, Jackson got himself in real trouble by commenting that "all Hymie wants to talk about is Israel; every time you go to Hymietown, that's all they want to talk about." When this was made public, Jackson did his best to avoid responsibility, but finally apologized. But he still sees nothing wrong about the remark. In *Newsweek* (April 9) he insisted that Hymie is "noninsulting colloquial language." It is certainly colloquial. But it's just as certainly insulting.

Of course, there are worse names that Jews are called, more insulting and more threatening. Hymie is not as bad as "kike." But then, neither is "boy" or "Sambo" or the yiddish word "Schwartz" as bad as "nigger." And yet blacks—and thoughtful whites—consider those lesser terms racist. One would think that a black, especially an extremely intelligent leader like Jackson, who is trying to build a multi-ethnic coalition, would understand this. Clearly, however, he does not.

All of this points up a continuing problem in real life: the right thing is frequently done by the wrong person. There are many in the black community, as well as on the left, who would like to see someone else doing what Jackson is doing. But it took Jackson to do it. No one else had the drive, the ambition and the talent. We believe that Jackson has made an historic breakthrough in American politics. It would be nice if he became fully worthy of the role he is playing.

Jackson's worst side has come out in the flap over his 'Hymie' remarks.

Jackson takes big step toward transformed political agenda

In his bid for the Democratic presidential nomination, Jesse Jackson has already changed the face of American politics. By bringing hundreds of thousands of new, mostly young, black voters into the electoral arena, he has continued the process begun in Chicago, Boston and Philadelphia this past year and has given it a national focus. As Jackson said after taking 26 percent of the statewide vote and 87 percent of the black vote in the New York primary April 3, "We have won our self-respect. Never again shall old-line Democrats take us for granted and Republicans write us off."

On a national level, the accuracy of this statement will depend in part on Jackson's ability to keep the proportion of blacks voting in November as high as it has been in the presidential primaries. But even if the black vote drops off in the

general election, the impact of Jackson's campaign on municipal and congressional elections in the years ahead seems assured. In New York, for example, Jackson came close to carrying the city with only the black vote and 34 percent of the Hispanic vote. A coalition of blacks, Hispanics and labor next year could easily defeat incumbent Mayor Ed Koch—who has antagonized all three constituencies—assuming a suitable candidate can be found. Similar situations may exist in several other cities and congressional districts.

Jackson has also taken over George McGovern's role as representative of the left. As such he has been forcing issues into the national debate that no other major candidates have discussed since 1972. In Wisconsin, speaking to the state legislature, Jackson said he was the only

Democratic presidential candidate talking about "social change" rather than "social service," and the only one committed to a real end to the arms race. "There are those who say that they can't afford to throw away their vote on someone who can't win," Jackson said. "But I say, we can't afford a political leadership that doesn't adopt a no-first-strike policy" or one without a program to empower the poor and rebuild the cities.

In Philadelphia, speaking to the World Affairs Council, Jackson observed that if Reagan has his way the military budget will be as great this year as it was in real terms during the Vietnam war, and that Mondale and Hart are not far behind. Reagan calls for \$1.9 trillion in military spending over the next five years. Mondale for \$1.8 trillion. Hart for \$1.6 trillion. On the other hand, Jackson said, "I believe that we should decrease it.... We cannot have guns and butter. We do not need dangerous destabilizing weapons systems. We do not need the hungry, the homeless, the unemployed walking the streets of America," he concluded.

He also called for an end to tax policies that "encourage mergers and disinvestment," and instead suggested pouring our nation's resources into rebuilding our industries and cities and "into developing our most precious resource—the minds of our children."

It is on foreign policy, along with military spending, that Jackson differs most sharply not only from Reagan, but also from Mondale and Hart. He has consistently opposed military intervention—in Grenada and Nicaragua, as well as Lebanon—as a matter of principle. He is the only candidate in either party who has announced an intention to go to Managua and meet with the Sandinistas, thus presenting the administration with a direct and unmistakable challenge. The sudden stiffening of House leader Tip O'Neill's spine on the question of \$21 million more for the CIA to conduct its illegal war against Nicaragua may in part be due to Jackson's raising this issue so clearly.

Of course, Jackson's main hope for white and Hispanic votes lies in raising these issues, since it is people on the left who are most likely to support a black and to rally to these flags. And it is certainly true that most blacks are voting for

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ST21

NEW LIGHT?

A LETTER OF MINE, "THE STERN A Gang-Nazi Link" (ITT, Jan. 18), ran to 7 3/4 column inches. The paper followed that with an attack on me, "Zionist-Nazi tie is a smear," by Harold Karabell (ITT, Feb. 8) that ran for 30 inches. Needless to say, I replied immediately, to his many points, naturally at length.

Not seeing my letter, I finally called the saintly democratic socialist editor: "It was too long, and, besides, the debate on Zionism has gone on too long." Now the wonderful fellow could have told me to shorten my reply, but he had done no such thing, and if I hadn't called, weeks later, to demand the right of reply, nothing would be run, even now. Readers will therefore understand that this is perforce, a much too brief response:

Karabell doesn't deny that the Stern Gang, the organization of Israeli Prime Minister Yitzhak Shamir, offered to go to war on Hitler's side. How is the truth a smear? Karabell insists that "No necessary political conclusions follow from Brenner's indictment." Hilarious! The prime minister of the Zionist state was a rank traitor, and we are forbidden to draw conclusions!

Karabell proclaims himself a supporter of the Zionist peace movement, and denounces as extremism my call "For a democratic secular Palestine in a democratic secular world." I would ask: what is extremist about a democratic secular world? Or, for that matter, about a democratic secular Palestine? Karabell knows, or should know, that Israel denies Jewish women the right to initiate a divorce, and he doesn't ever expect to wake up and find that some fabled democratic secular Israel has granted them that elementary right, at least not until Orthodox rabbis take to eating pork. How can we ever expect such a state to grant equality to its Arab citizens?

It should be perfectly obvious that there is only one state that will ever grant equality to Jewish women or Arabs: a democratic secular Palestine, in a democratic secular Middle East, and a democratic secular world.

Those who would wish to know more about Zionist-Nazi collaboration should read my book, *Zionism in the Age of Dictators*.

For the revolutionary overthrow of all the states in the Middle East,

—Lenni Brenner
New York

St. James replies: Lacking any new ideas or new information, Brenner's communication didn't warrant a full page response.

RAISIN

THE MUSICAL RAISIN, PIECED TOGETHER after Lorraine Hansberry's death illustrates some of the twisting suggested in Aishah Rahman's excellent article (ITT, March 28). Matriarchal Lena Younger is reduced to a character from *The Jeffersons*. The show deals patronizingly with her Christianity and her arguments against a family liquor store; church and barroom scenes are introduced to make room for musical numbers toying with black religion and celebrating booze. Ruth Younger's abortion dilemma, bravely handled in the original story, is dismissed, and her troubled husband (Lena's son) is transformed into a candidate for a minority business loan, eager to help his boy get into a good college. As the family departs for its new home in a white neighborhood, this "strong father figure" is given the last gesture. When Lena, the moral and mental force behind the change, leaves behind the flower she has been nurturing, he gathers up the plant for his forgetful momma as the curtain falls.

Now a new generation is rediscovering Hansberry's original play. When undergraduates gave an outstanding

performance of *A Raisin in the Sun* here at Duke University last year, the audience of young pragmatists—learning to defer their own idealistic hopes—accepted the logic of settling for a cash rebate from bigoted suburbanites rather than pursuing a dream. So they were caught off-guard by the family's decision to pull up stakes, against all odds. But they were deeply moved when Lena Younger returned, alone, to pick up her fragile plant and carry it tenderly to a new home.

—Peter H. Wood
Durham, N.C.

EVERYWHERE IS SOMEWHERE

AT THE BEGINNING OF JOAN WALSH'S otherwise useful review of two books on gender gap politics (ITT, March 21), she writes of finding herself "in a Nowhere, New Mexico bar."

Perhaps she doesn't realize that the same literary, visual and intellectual devices, that have long been used to stereotype, caricature and dismiss women, minorities, the elderly and the Third World, have also frequently been applied to rural and provincial areas. You need only apply the general lessons of Goffman's *Gender Advertisements*, McCannell's *The Tourist* or Said's *Orientalism* the next time you address a provincial area, to understand what I mean.

New Mexico, in many ways, is an internal colony. Our resources are exploited by outside capital to provide energy for the cosmopolitan centers. We are left with pollution, nuclear waste, substandard roads, education, housing and health care, and one of the highest proportions of people below the poverty level in the nation. Our history and varied cultures are romanticized and trivialized to cater to the shallow preconceptions of tourists.

Perhaps I am making too much of this slight, but such small things often reveal larger prejudicial and harmful attitudes.

—Chris Wilson
Nowhere, N.M.

POTLESS

DAVID OSBORNE'S ARTICLE (ITT, March 28) was excellent and essentially correct. Leftists should consider working to secure the Democratic nomination for Gary Hart. If past ADA ratings are any indication, Mondale is more liberal than Hart. But Hart does offer a synthesis and new ideas worthy of the support of leftists.

Voters will peel off, and Reagan will win in a Hartless election. Osborne is correct on this point. But, to expect that the locked out—blacks, women, Hispanics, progressive white males, etc.—will automatically vote for Hart is wrong. Without Jesse Jackson or a woman such as Maxine Waters sharing

LETTERS

In These Times is an independent newspaper committed to democratic pluralism and to helping build a popular movement for socialism in the United States. Our pages are open to a wide range of views on the left, both socialist and non-socialist. Except for editorial statements appearing on the editorial page, opinions expressed in columns and in feature or news stories are those of the author and are not necessarily those of the editors. We welcome comments and opinion pieces from our readers.

the ticket, Hart is unlikely to see a rainbow after the November storm. And, without a rainbow there will be no pot of gold at the end.

—Elmer P. Chase III
Elmhurst, Pa.

GEORGIE BOY

CONCERNING YOUR ARTICLE ON George McGovern (ITT, March 28), not only did McGovern not "rise alone in the Senate to attack Lyndon Johnson's Vietnam policy," he did not rise at all at the fateful hour. That distinction of honor belongs to the late Senators Morse (Oregon) and Gruening (Alaska) who stood alone against a president bent on war and a pliant Congress, when voting on the "Tonkin Gulf" Resolution of 1965.

—William Morosoff
Sherman Oaks, Calif.

HORSEMEN

RE "CONSERVATISM AFTER 1984 AND Reagan" (ITT, March 21): Ronald Reagan is neither Neville Chamberlain nor Hitler, but rather von Hindenburg. The so-called American "conservatives" are like fascists everywhere, searching for their man-on-the-white-horse. Obviously, Reagan is not their man (too timid, too cautious, too much wanting to be loved, too old). Al Haig, anyone?

—William Morosoff
Sherman Oaks, Calif.

AH SO-O

JULIA REICHERT (ITT, MARCH 14) notes that critics of the Communist Party dismiss its members as "Stalinists—whatever that means." Perhaps I can offer Reichert a definition of the term in two parts.

1. Active support for the tyranny of Joseph Stalin. During the years covered in *Seeing Red*, all the Western Communist parties, not just the CPUSA, worked diligently as publicists-apologists for a regime that had mass murder and terror against its own citizens as its primary method.

2. Behaving like Joseph Stalin, personally and politically, here in America. The structure and organization of the CP was inherently anti-democratic, and the inner circles of the party were governed by the same methods of suppression of rational free thought and

ritual informing-confession-humiliation-expulsion that their beloved Uncle Joe used. The CPUSA devoted almost as much energy to attacking the rest of the left, be it social democratic or Trotskyist, as it did to organizing workers or fighting racism. A point of some interest not mentioned in *Seeing Red* is that the Smith Act, which was used to prosecute CP leaders, was, when first conceived, supported by the CP as a means of shutting down the Socialist Workers Party.

To define a Stalinist for someone who spent seven years making a film about Stalinists may seem a bit presumptuous, but since the above facts are given little attention in Reichert's film, I offer this humbly.

—Bill Wilson
Dayton, Ohio

PRIVATE SECTOR

JOHN JUDIS (ITT, MARCH 21) WRITES that I believe that "private stagnation is the result of fiscal crisis." This is untrue. I believe that "private stagnation" is the result of capital underproduction (*Accumulation Crisis*, Basil Blackwell, Oxford and New York, 1984). It is true that in *The Fiscal Crisis of the State* (St. Martin's Press, New York, 1973), I "did not view the fiscal crisis of the state as a reflection of the stagnation in the private sector" (Judis' words). In my interpretation of crisis tendencies in the '60s and early '70s, I rejected the standard social democratic, Keynesian view of the relationship between the growth of private capital and the state economy—a view that Judis apparently retains. I argued that the fiscal crisis was the result of private growth, not private stagnation, which postdated the fiscal crisis by a decade.

—James O'Connor
Professor of Sociology and Economics
University of California, Santa Cruz

CORRECTION

IN A STORY ABOUT THE SCREEN ACTORS Guild's proposed merger with the Screen Extras Guild in the April 11 issue, part of a sentence was dropped. It should have read: The SAG-SEG merger proposal won the endorsement of the SAG national board by a whopping 70-1 margin.

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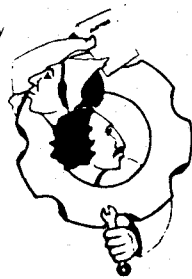
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PERSPECTIVES

They want to be that way, so they are

By Kate Ellis

TO FREUD'S QUESTION: "What do women want?" Helen Hazen's *Endless Rapture* (Chas. Scribner's Sons) answers: "They want to read romances, and especially those in which the heroine gets raped near the beginning." Publishing and bookselling statistics back her up.

"Upwards of \$200 million of paperback publishers' annual sales are represented by romance fiction," says *Publishers Weekly*. "Readership is estimated at 20 million. No other category of paperback publishing can boast such numbers." A *Time* reporter at a Romance Writers Conference in 1981 estimated that women bought as many as 20 romances a week, for a monthly cost of roughly \$150. B. Dalton reports that 30 percent of its mass market paperback sales are in the

area of romances, of which Hazen's "rape" category (called "spectaculars" by the industry) constitutes about a quarter.

In titling her book *Endless Rapture*, Hazen probably took note of the fact that "rape" and "rapture" come from the same Latin verb meaning "to carry away." Her thesis is not that women enjoy being raped in actuality, but that they enjoy reading, and fantasizing, about the conversion of the one into the other. In the "spectacular," the rape occurs before page 100, and the novels continue for at least 300 pages more. It takes that long for the heroine to get her rapist (or, in some cases, some other man) into shape for the true confluence of hearts and bodies toward which all romances inevitably move.

Hazen uses this scenario as a blunt instrument to attack the women's movement for not taking seriously the fact that "the most important emotion women feel is love." She does not ask why this should

not be so for men. The existence of a million dollar industry is not an item to be interrogated. Women want to be that way and therefore they are. "Nor do I think," she adds, "that many women want their natures changed." Hers is an essentialist position, and the women's movement is doomed to failure because it has dared to suggest that women's relation to love may not be entirely natural.

Were Hazen to look more closely at the academic feminist front she attacks, she would see a good deal of internal debate and disagreement. Many feminists see women's nature as an unchanging essence. This tends to lead to positions such as Jean Bethke Elshtain's enthusiasm for the traditional family where "the nourishment of humanity [by women] takes place at every point of the life cycle." It also appears in writers against pornography such as Andrea Dworkin, who see an essential female purity pitted against an essential male violence.

Yet the impact of the mass media on women is a concern of the left as well as the right, and of feminists who hold widely differing views on love and women's nature, the family and pornography. Those of us who worry about an equation of women with nature, nature with nurturing and nurturing with traditional attitudes toward the family and female purity would agree with some of her criticisms. Yet one hesitates to do so, since the book is clearly intended to be part of a backlash against the movement that comes mostly from the right, even though it is abetted from within by "pro-family" types like Elshtain.

Recognizing this risk, I would like to point out some insights in the book that merit consideration by feminists. First, we need to notice that the rapes in romance have less in common than is usually recognized with the shattering experiences that women bring to rape crisis centers. Hazen tells us that they are the hero's way of telling a woman "that she is so desirable that he will defy all the rules of honor and decency in order to have her." This makes sense only as a component of women's fantasies. As a motive for rape, researchers will tell us, it is absurd.

The insight that women who fantasize about rape do not necessarily want to be raped has finally reached the mainstream, though it has hardly swept all opposing views before it. But if fantasy is not a simple representation of what you want, what is it? Hazen views it as a catharsis: "A woman's horror of defilement and a man's horror of destruction are not the wish for their occurrence. On the contrary, the interest lies in how to prevent their occurrence, and also in the temptation to imagine the calamity when normal life seems not lively enough from day to day."

This catharsis became available to women only in the last few years: Gothic novels and other women's fiction of earlier decades had no explicit sex in them.

Feminists are deeply divided in their estimate of the effects of imagining "the calamity" of rape. It is feared that traces may linger, or creep back into the unconscious, from whence they may influence our wishes and actions in ways we do not wholly understand. I suspect that fantasy may be a core of conservatism in all of us, and those who want to see some change in our present arrangements, including present gender arrangements, will simply have to live with our uneasy fascination with domination and submission, power and taboo, with being ravishing and being ravished. But what, then, is the relationship between that core and our behavior, or between it and our political ideas?

The study of fantasy opens up for scrutiny the relationship between pleasure, desire and the unconscious. It is an area that advocates of feminism and socialism need to take seriously, neither bowing to the prevailing forms of pleasure that are available, nor scorning or oversimplifying the desires that propel people toward them. What is called love in these novels, as many observers have noticed, does not involve dirty dishes or unpaid bills. It is a gratification of infan-

tile wishes, wishes that are more intense than any that come later.

Hazen's useful contribution to this discussion is that she sees positive features in the formulaic fantasy about love that romances offer. These fantasies, she observes, typically involve a triumph over obstacles.

"...[H]igh drama is generally a form of pleasure, even when it deals with unpleasant topics. This is especially true...where the topic is basic to the female imagination: that delightful rush of excitement when one's consort treats one unjustly—in fact or in fantasy; the challenge of it, the girding up for the grandest endeavor of life, which is the conquest."

Since feminism also sees in men the obstacles to women's freedom and happiness, she wonders why they don't also envision triumph in the way romances do.

I'd answer by pointing up, as feminist writers tend to do, the limits of fantasy in the actual lives of men and women. It seems that much of its pleasure, whether you are reading or creating your own private drama, depends on the absence of the unexpected. The fantasizer (or her surrogate, the heroine of a romance) is always able to triumph over the most extreme form of male domination embodied in her abusive (though charming) rapist. By picking the most extreme forms of domination, she increases the pleasure of her triumph.

Romance fiction is the biggest-selling category of paperback book publishing. Helen Hazen says it's because love is women's most important emotion.

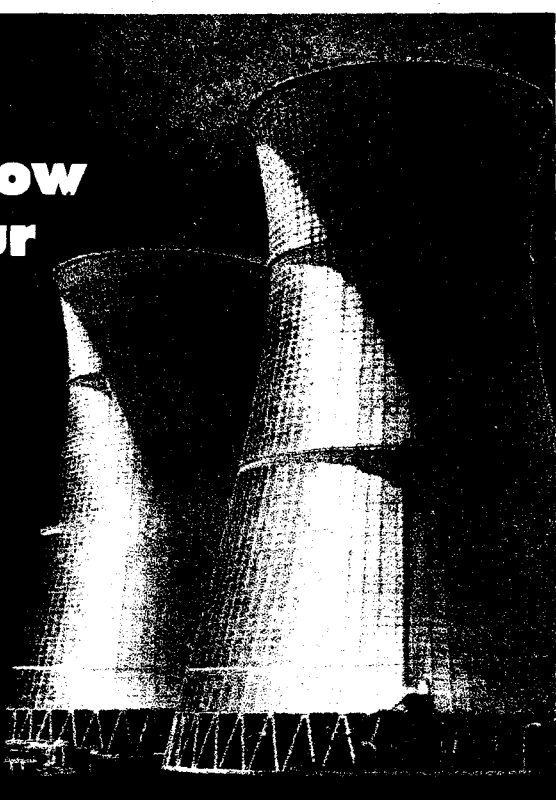


But the form of the triumph in romances—marriage—is thoroughly conventional. In romances a reader gets what she wants when she wants it: so many pages from the end. There is no room for real variety or real surprise. Fantasy follows for more individual variation, though the fantasizer cannot surprise herself. Further down on the scape of predictability, good literature goes beyond the inventiveness of fantasy to produce surprises that feel right. And in the part of our lives that is not fantasized, where we are not the sole author and director of our daily dramas, neither our obstacles nor our triumphs can be wholly predicted. We are talking about a diminishing order of egocentricity.

Hazen dismisses feminist literature for its pessimism about the power of heterosexual love to banish all pain forever. She does not ask what a craving for reading that makes this claim might say about the actual state of heterosexual relations. Fiction for women as the paperback publishers define it never speaks seriously about the limits of fantasy, which is why we need feminist writers who do. They help us not only to claim our dreams of endless rapture, but also to see their limits, what is pushing against them, and where our real strengths lie.

Kate Ellis teaches English at Livingston College, Rutgers University.

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By Henry Rosemont Jr.

UNLIKE THEIR EUROPEAN cousins, Chinese dragons are regarded as altogether auspicious animals. They signify benevolent authority, popular prosperity and personal good fortune, to such an extent that they have long been taken as a major symbol of China itself.

For three weeks I saw hundreds of dragons. I saw them undulating rhythmically through the mud-slicked streets of rural villages in the interior, and later saw them prancing on the pavements of Shanghai. At all times they appeared to be in high spirits, reflecting the liveliness of the young men who held them aloft as they made their way through throngs of people cheering them on.

The occasion was Spring Festival—China's Thanksgiving, Christmas and New Year's rolled into one three-week holiday. The lunar cycle determines the high day, which this year fell on February 2, but the firecrackers did not abate appreciably until after the Feast of Lanterns two weeks later.

It was a memorable series of celebrations, striking in the frequency with which the old betokened the new.

The countryside.

In the early morning hours of New Year's Day my family and I boarded a local bus for a 160-kilometer ride to a small town in east central Sichuan, famed for its Buddhist stone carvings.

We arrived almost two hours late, largely due to the crowds filling the main street of every village and market town we drove through. In addition to the many dragons blocking our progress, we encountered brightly dressed, celebratory brides-to-be, in stylized processions exacting tribute from local shopkeepers in exchange for blessings for their businesses.

Several teams of dragon-boat dancers were also in these streets, skipping and jumping through the crowds, around the brides, under the bellies of the dragons, and dipping the prows of their little boats at each domicile in turn, thereby insuring good fortune for the inhabitants during the coming year.

At the Taoist and Buddhist temples we visited during this period incense burned in sufficient quantities to permeate the outdoors, mixing with the smell of the light gray smoke flowing upward from flaming "spirit money" being sent to the deities and ancestors.

The day after New Year's I witnessed a much more somber ritual: the funeral of an elderly woman. Not until I saw the coffin was I aware of the occasion, and my initial surprise was twofold: first, that a burial should take place at the height of holiday celebrations, and second, that a burial should take place at all in this land where cremation has been official social policy since Liberation.

The throng of onlookers made it difficult for both spectators and participants in the just-concluding service. Equally difficult was aligning the burial order of march immediately thereafter. But finally two old men lit strings of firecrackers attached to long bamboo fishing poles they were carrying to signal not only the beginning of the procession, but also to clear a path for it as the men began to wave their popping poles to and fro.

They were followed by another duo, one beating a drum and the other clapping cymbals, slowly, mournfully. Next came a large, paper-flowered wreath held by four young girls, crying. Next again came the casket; very rough-hewn, painted shiny black, lashed to thick poles carried on the shoulders of eight pall bearers. Behind them walked three men in their 30s dressed in white, turbaned, wearing armbands signifying filiality, holding trays of offeratory flowers and food, weeping and moaning loudly. Other relatives and friends followed, some carrying banners, about 60 people in all.

Unlike all of my other experiences during the holiday season, this one gave me a disquieting moment over and above the



JoAnn Rosemont

The rat brings back tradition

solemnity of the occasion. The past was clearly alive in the present at this funeral, and I therefore could not but applaud the relaxation of government pressures and propaganda that has made it possible once again for people to give expression to their deepest feelings in the traditional ways they find satisfying.

I could not applaud physically, however, for the crush of the crowd all around me kept my arms literally pinned to my sides, causing my reflections to change course. How many trees, I began to wonder, would have to be cut down for a billion coffins, how many fertile acres....

The city.

Back in Shanghai for the Feast of Lanterns, the scenes were more sophisticated, but otherwise similar to those (save the funeral) I had watched in the countryside: traditional, moving, joyous.

Performances, activities and exhibits at more than 20 locations in the city over a three-day period were held under the general sponsorship of the Shanghai Trade Union Association. My wife and I, along with other foreign teachers, were invited to spend the evening at one of these locations, the East Shanghai Workers' Cultural Palace.

We saw outdoor performances of "China Dog" lion acts, tumblers, acrobats, stilt-walkers, all of them illuminated by scores of handmade lanterns. More drum and cymbal orchestras—several of them uniformed in jogging suits—filled the night air with unusual but pleasurable cadences. Firecrackling was omnipresent, the crowds were large and dragons were everywhere.

Indoors we saw still more lanterns, painting and calligraphy displays, wood, bamboo and stone sculptures, bonsai exhibits and much more. Here, as outside, everything was executed with skill and grace, and our appreciation was enhanced by the vivacity of the performers and artisans.

Our host for the evening, Mr. Wu Guofu, told us with pride in his voice, "Everything you have seen and heard this evening is the work of amateurs. Almost all of them are factory workers between the ages of 20 and 40; they have been planning, creating and rehearsing at this Palace throughout the year."

When asked who had set the themes for this holiday, he referred to the introductory Chinese remarks in the festival program, which said that the trade union members had organized these activities themselves "in keeping with the an-

nouncement of the Central Committee that we should enrich the leisure and cultural activities of the broad masses of the workers at all levels." Dragons? "The Chinese people have long been fond of dragons," he said with a slight smile.

To this a Chinese friend in his mid-20s, as exuberant as everyone else, added: "I was born and raised here, and this is the first time I have seen traditional performances, folk themes—and dragons—at a

spring festival in Shanghai."

According to legend, the first cycle of the Chinese calendar—60 years per cycle—was set by the emperor Huang Di in 2697 BCE. Thus whatever Orwellian gloom attaches to 1984 in the West, it is the Year of the Rat here, being the High Beginning of the 27th group, the 78th cycle. A propitious time for dragons to appear. ■

Henry Rosemont Jr. teaches at Fudan University in Shanghai.

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NOTEBOOK

Mole, a monthly magazine \$2.50 (subscriptions \$18.00, P.O. Box 43403, Washington, DC 20010)

If *Mole's* first issue, which hit Washington newsstands in February, is any indication, Paul Krassner's *Realist*—which expired soon after it printed a first-hand account of Lyndon Johnson bugging John Kennedy's corpse—has finally found a worthy successor.

The highlight of the first issue is a parody of *The New Republic*, entitled *The New Repulsive*. The *New Repulsive's* cover promises articles on "Ten Reasons to Hate Arabs" and "The Case for Nerve Gas." The lead editorial, entitled "Oy Jerusalem," begins:

The outcry in some fashionable media circles over the recent events on the so-called West Bank points up again the need for a final solution to the Arab question. The facts of the latest incident are plain: In "occupied" territory, an Arab mosque was

Jaruzelski to lift his ban on Southern boogie rock and allow the Marshall Tucker Band to play the Lenin Shipyard in Gdansk. His condition: that they change their name to the Martial Law Tucker Band. Solidarity leader Lech Walesa is expected to join the group, playing the synthesizer.

The first issue also includes a *National Enquirer*/*Star* parody edition on the Kennedy family ("Joan and Ted Beg Ghost of JFK: 'Bless Our Love Match,'" "New Tests Prove Judy Exner Still a Virgin"), a Bob Hope speech to the troops in El Salvador ("When Nancy finally found out that we were waging war against guerrillas, she thought Ron was making another Bonzo movie") and "How to Pick Up

pizzazz of pop culture and the staying power of a sourcebook. Film lovers have to have it, but anyone interested in ideology and the relationship between commercial pop culture and society, will also welcome it. The interviews were collected over the last decade and a half by the editors of *Cineaste*, the respected journal of politics and film. Regular *Cineaste* readers come prepared for the well-edited, intelligent dialogues with such filmmakers as Costa Gavras, Dusan Makavejev, Tomas Gutierrez Alea, Gordon Parks and Andrzej Wajda. The editors have also included four long interviews with leading critics, including Molly Haskell and John Berger.

The interviews raise questions you would like to ask an artist

and exploiting their audiences. There is where the politics comes in." —Pat Aufderheide

A History of Rhode Island Working People

Edited by Paul Buhle, Scott Molloy and Gail Sansbury
Institute for Labor Studies and Research, 15 Jefferson St., Providence, RI 02908, 88 pp., \$3.00

This book is surely among the year's best bargains. In its size and in the number, quality and impact of its illustrations, *Rhode Island Working People* resembles a black-and-white issue of *Sports Illustrated*. Roughly evenly divided between graphics and crisply written text, it offers an accessible, though hardly leisurely, tour of the eventful past of the state's labor movement.

Rhode Island is shown as host to some of the nation's first factory strikes and to the first Labor Day parade, as home to such exemplary early working-class leaders as Seth Luther, as site of the Dorr Rebellion, as a locus of immigrant activism and of Knights of Labor, Industrial Workers of the World, Socialist Party and American Federation of Labor strength, and finally, as the battlefield in the Brown and Sharpe strike, one of this country's longest and most bitter recent labor conflicts.

The editors and contributors display a sharp eye for the often offbeat cultural contributions of Rhode Island workers, from the early poetic indictments of factory life by Thomas Man to the tightrope walking of printers' unionist Benoni Sweet. Also available at the same address are longer articles on many of the same subjects collected in *Labor and Community Militance in Rhode Island* (\$3.50) and Duane Clinker's fine photo essay on the Brown and Sharpe strike (\$4.00).

—Dave Roediger

Killings

By Calvin Trillin
Ticknor & Fields, 231 pp., \$14.95

Murder is a way of life in the U.S. Every few minutes someone takes hot lead in the gut, cold steel in the back or ground strychnine in the soup.

Besides lathering people to a frenzy in favor of capital punishment, this homicide epidemic reveals a great deal about the country we live in. And not just by pointing out the gory side effects of an economic system that touts cutthroat competition as the cure for most problems. Murders also sharpen our gaze on the subtler details of American life, giving everyone a good look at what lurks beneath the surface in a particular patch of society.

Calvin Trillin deftly proves this in *Killings*—a compilation of murder tales he penned for the *New Yorker* as their roving correspondent. It was his task every three weeks to send a story back to New York chronicling the way folks live in some curious corner of the U.S.

"I was always looking for some excuse to be there," he told *In These Times*. "One of the best ways to get into a place was through murders."

But his dispatch about Miami lawyer Harvey St. Jean—who was found a bloody mess staining the upholstery of his late-model Cadillac—is not just a whodunit. In fact, it's not a whodunit at all. Neither Trillin nor

anyone else not directly connected with the slaying knows how the flashy attorney met his end on the way to the country club one spring day in 1975. But after examining the facts of the case, Trillin arrived at a verdict about life in America's tropical boomtown.

"There may be cities in which the respectability of a self-made criminal lawyer will always have its limits," Trillin writes, "but in Miami just about everyone seems to have a tenuous hold on respectability anyway. The historic attraction of the area for promoters and grifters and profligates being what it is, Miami remains a hard place to cash a check. The difference between an established family and a new family seems to be that the established family pulled off some successful land-flipping in the '30s instead of the '50s."

Most of these stories focus as much on the local people who rehash the murder everyday over coffee as on the victim or assailants.

When describing how a backwoods slumlord fired a bullet into the chest of a documentary filmmaker for leading a camera crew into a squalid shantytown, Trillin rapidly reels of the who, what, when and where. Then he sits a spell on the why—offering us nuggets of detail on the history, problems and customs of the hill counties of eastern Kentucky.

He points out that a lot of people in those parts—poor as well as rich—thought the property owner was justified in shooting a trespasser who was poking around in somebody else's business. That's the sort of information that would probably get chopped out of most newspaper accounts of the filmmaker's murder. But to Trillin, it's the most important fact of the case—and he builds a story around it. By looking into the ways of hill people and unearthing their deep insecurities about facing outsiders, he offers a fuller view of both the killing and Appalachia.

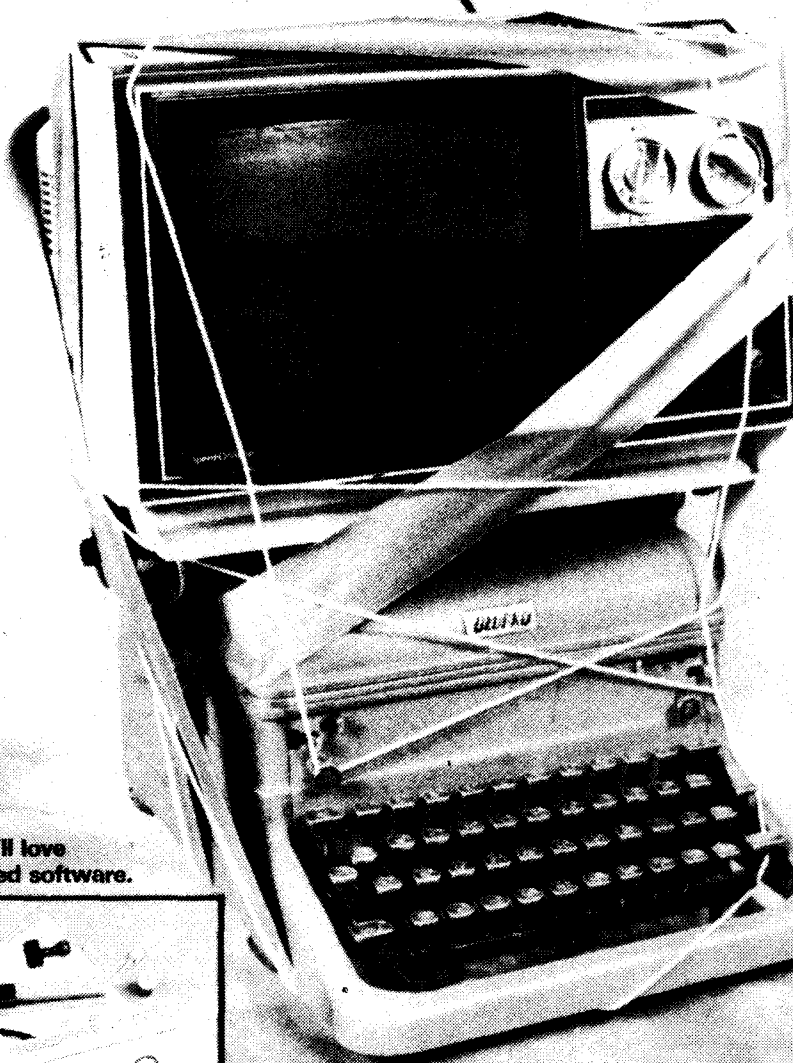
As with any collection of stories, some clearly outshine the others. Although enjoyable, the weaker selections leave you wishing that food had figured more prominently in the crime. Trillin, of course, has done for roadside diners and rib joints what Mark Twain did for Mississippi River travel. His dry, witty, conversational style fits the topic of food marvelously—his culinary stories roll easily along, as if being narrated between bites of gumbo or spaghetti carbonara. But in *Killings*, Trillin seems to dawdle too much in some places—murders, after all, change the universe in a split second, while mealtime arrives regularly three times a day.

Yet most of *Killings* offers drama unmatched by Trillin's restaurant writings. These stories chime in the same tones as good literature. You find strong characters, vivid settings, deep emotions and potent conflicts. And oddly enough, politics too.

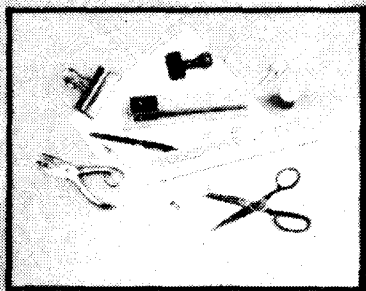
No matter what the situation—the motel suicide of a born-again Russian *emigre* preacher, the shooting of a hippie by a police agent posing as a hippie or the mineshaft death of a woman who challenged the local status quo by becoming a miner—the distinctions between private suffering and public issues dissolve. Political conflict appears to be a way of life in the U.S., too—even down to the subtler details of our daily lives. —Jay Walljasper

INPRINT

Sometimes an old idea
is the best idea.



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OLDPRO II

... just a little behind the times.

razed by Israeli developers to make way for a modern high-rise condominium for homeless Jews. Hundreds of Arab students rioted; and, regrettably, 53 of them chose to commit suicide by hurling themselves in front of Israeli bullets.

Mole includes "Hot Flashes" modeled on the news shorts at the beginning of *U.S. News and World Report*. Some samples:

- President Reagan's wooing of women's groups will suffer setbacks if he pursues plans to turn the Statue of Liberty into a man.

- Poland. Look for Communist Party strongman Wojciech

Feminists" (including a 12-question questionnaire with which to query your date).

There is something to offend almost everyone. If you liked *Truly Tasteless Jokes*, Vol. I, including the jokes aimed at your ethnic group, race, sex or sexual preference, you'll love the *Mole*. If you didn't, then don't blame me if you're offended.

—John B. Judis

The Cineaste Interviews

Edited by Dan Georgakas and Lenny Rubenstein
Lake View Press, 396 pp., \$11.95

This collection of interviews with noted filmmakers has the

An ad from the most recent issue of MOLE, a humor magazine that has something to offend everyone.

about the relationship between art and society, and about the conditions of production in such an expensive, unwieldy artform. Since the subjects were usually interviewed on the heels of a successful film, discussion is typically related to concrete examples. An introduction by Chicago critic Roger Ebert raises an eyebrow higher than the editors might at the notion of "political film," but his conclusion says it all: "None of these filmmakers devoted their careers to demeaning



BLACK LITERATURE

The world in the artist's seeing eyes

In Search of Our Mothers' Gardens
By Alice Walker
Harcourt Brace Jovanovich,
397 pp., \$14.95

By Deborah E. McDowell

In the closing essay of Alice Walker's latest book, she recalls a childhood accident that left one of her eyes blind and surrounded by a mass of scar tissue. The emotional scars remained long after the unsightly tissue had been removed, until her three-year-old daughter swept them away one afternoon with a single remark. The story, titled "Beauty: When the Other Dancer Is the Self," exemplifies the extraordinary openness and honesty that characterize the entire collection.

As Walker puts her child down for a nap, the child focuses on her blind eye. Walker cringes, steadying herself for the worst. But the daughter stuns her mother with this innocent, yet trenchant observation: "Mommy, there's a world in your eye." What the child perceives without understanding is a striking paradox—an eye no less "seeing" for being blind.

Comprised of essays, articles, reviews and addresses written between 1966 and 1982, *In Search of Our Mothers' Gardens* shows a writer with expansive and incisive vision. With few exceptions the prose is crisp, confident, elegant and moving.

In these pieces, all published earlier but collected here for the first time, Walker's panoramic eye ranges over personal matters—her childhood in the South, her lamented separation from her father, her attempted suicide, the fears engendered by her interracial marriage in bigoted Mississippi, her experiences as a writer. It also takes in political matters as well—the civil rights movement, the women's movement, homophobia, intra-racial color prejudice, nuclear disarmament and anti-Semitism. As Walker's

eye surveys subjects both personal and political, it focuses on the connections between the two, clarifying the now axiomatic statement that "the personal is political."

Walker establishes links between people and events separated by time, space and specific situation, reinforcing her belief that "every single thing on earth is connected." We must "strain to encompass" the larger perspective, she says, and attempt to make connections "where none existed before." We must search for the common thread.

Many of her pieces reveal this "common thread." Walker hears echoes of black freedom fighters (Nat Turner, Harriet Tubman, Sojourner Truth, Frederick Douglass, Malcolm X and Martin Luther King) in *History Will Absolve Me*, Fidel Castro's defense of the Cuban revolution.

The prose is crisp, elegant and moving.

She connects her father's poverty and anonymity with that of men like him everywhere who have been exploited by the rich. In Israel's "settlements," Walker sees "a chilling reminder" of "those forts that dot the American plains." She links the American women's movement with women's struggles all over the world.

Although Walker believes American feminists often don't make that connection, she writes, "To contemplate the women's movement in isolation from the rest of the world would be—given the racism, sexism, elitism and ignorance of so many American feminists—extremely defeating of solidarity among women, as well as depressing to the most optimistic spirit."

Walker freely acknowledges the common thread connecting her with other writers, particularly Phillis Wheatley, Nella Larsen, Zora Neale Hurston and Jean Toomer, whose work has been frequently misunderstood and forgotten. It isn't enough, however, to acknowledge this connection in passing. Nothing less than a full-scale resurrection of their work will suffice.

In "Zora Neale Hurston: A Cautionary Tale and a Partisan View" and "Looking for Zora," Walker records the great lengths to which she went to bring Hurston's work out of the shadows of literary history, not only because of its literary merits and cultural value to black people, but also because Hurston's experience as a writer can serve as a "cautionary tale" for future black writers. Despite—or perhaps because of—Hurston's depiction of "black people as complete, complex, *undiminished* human beings," her work was attacked, belittled and "consigned to sneering oblivion."

Worse still, Hurston herself was forgotten: she died alone and penniless and was buried in an unmarked grave. "If a woman who had given so much of obvious value to all of us" could be forgotten, Walker asks, "what chance would someone else—for example, myself—have?"

One immense story.

Although Walker emphasizes the links between herself and earlier black writers, she sees the larger picture of all writers "writing one immense story—the same story, for the most part—with different parts...coming from a multitude of different perspectives. Until this is generally recognized, literature will always be broken into bits, black and white." Walker finds this segregated view of literature unsatisfactory and limiting. Her reading must include Zora Neale Hurston and Flannery O'Connor, Nella Larsen and Carson McCullers, Jean

Toomer and William Faulkner, Zen epigrams and haiku.

The same eye that roves and connects also "looks to the back and to the side" (the title of one of the essays), not with wishy-washy neutrality, but with an understanding of the complex nature of things. For example, she is inspired by post-revolutionary Cuban society and believes it will become more sensitive to its still disenfranchised citizens—homosexuals, Jehovah's Witnesses, women, political prisoners. But she is very critical of Cuba's "government-sanctioned dislike of homosexuals," considering it both "unfair and dangerous," as well as "an affront to human liberty and a mockery of the most profoundly revolutionary statement of the Cuban *Family Code*: 'All children are equal.'"

Similarly, Walker sees the Arab/Israeli conflict in much more complicated terms than any simple stand allows. "Yes, Israel must exist," writes Walker, for it has certainly suffered "heinous world maltreatment." But "when it moves into other people's territories, when it forces folks out of their kitchens, vineyards and beds, then it must be opposed."

Dissecting black writing.

Throughout this collection, Walker remains broad-minded and opposed to the "narrowed and narrowing view of life" that often prevails. She sees evidence of narrow thinking among black critics who "devalue any black writing that does not depict white people as primary antagonists." As she notes in "The Unglamorous but Worthwhile Duties of the Black Revolutionary Artist," these critics disparage any work that does not conform to the popular and prescribed formula for black artists: "usually two-thirds 'hate whitey's guts' and one-third 'I am black, beautiful and strong, and almost always right.'" Walker concludes, "Art is not flattery, necessarily, and the work of any artist must be more difficult than that."

While a formulaic approach to black writing has had a homogenizing effect on much black literature, recent work (significantly, by a greater number of black female than male writers) shows a reversing trend that makes this aspect of the essay seem dated. Other pieces are uneven or sketchy—perhaps because they were all written for different occasions and audiences and necessarily vary their pitch and scope. While the collection might have been strengthened by eliminating some of these sketchier pieces, such as "The Almost Year" and "Making the Moves and the Movies We Want," it does not lose coherence, for the editor has skillfully organized the pieces to create a remarkably revealing, developing self-portrait of Walker as artist and woman.

Although the pieces form an inventory of many evils—racism, sexism, classism, colorism, homophobia, anti-Semitism, imperialism—*In Search of Our Mothers' Gardens* has an optimistic spirit. That spirit particularly emerges when Walker remembers her childhood in the South, which she associated with poverty, pain, defeat and degradation until Martin Luther King returned it, redeemed, to her and other blacks.

This "new" vision of the South fuels most of Walker's writing and gives it its distinctive voice and character. Some may doubt that "there is a great deal of positive material I can draw

from my 'underprivileged' background," she says, "but they have never lived, as I have, at the end of a long road in a house that was faced by the edge of the world on one side and nobody for miles on the other."

This spirit of affirmation and optimism may find its most complete expression in the title essay. Beautifully lyrical and moving, it laments how the artistic spirit of centuries of black women was "driven to a numb and bleeding madness by the springs of creativity in them for which there was no release," how black mothers and grandmothers "died with their real gifts stifled within them." But then the eulogy shifts and soars in telling another part of the story, for not all those stilled creative spirits "perished in the wilderness."

Walker searches for the key to their survival as artists, despite slavery, back-breaking toil, relentless childbearing and extreme poverty. She finds that key in her mother's ambitious, brilliantly colored and originally designed gardens, one of the few outlets available to her and other "ordinary" artists who "ordered the universe in the image of [their] personal conception of Beauty." Walker challenges us, their descendants, to reclaim and celebrate the legacy of these everyday artists. "We must fearlessly pull out of ourselves and look at and identify with our lives the living creativity some of our great-grandmothers were not allowed to know."

There is a message in this essay for everyone buckling under the weight of oppression—a message both simple and challenging. Despite all the "isms" that oppress us in some form, we must struggle to "own our own souls." The creative impulse, however it is expressed, virtually guarantees such ownership. Walker saw this struggle in her mother, who succeeded in transforming the pain of oppression into the beauty of art. Walker has accepted her mother's legacy, recognizing that it carries the great responsibility to "give voice to centuries not only of silent bitterness and hate, but also of neighborly kindness and sustaining love."

Deborah E. McDowell is an assistant professor of English at Colby College in Waterville, Maine, and is currently a fellow at the Mary Ingraham Bunting Institute of Radcliffe College.

YOU CAN ORDER BY MAIL:

Books by Alice Walker:

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ARTS»ENTERTAINMENT



Susan Meiselas/ Magnum

PHOTOGRAPHY

Camera casts light on war

By David Helvarg

Susan Meiselas stops the car. The Salvadoran army has set up a roadblock at the bridge over the Torola River. Fighting can be heard from the fog-shrouded hills across the way. "Any chance to go on?" she asks, getting out of the car, a camera ready in one hand, a second hanging around her neck, swinging in front of her sweat-stained cotton blouse.

A truck comes up the road: civilian irregulars carrying G-3 assault rifles, ORDEN men bringing supplies for the troops. Meiselas is shooting away, self-assured, so at ease that no one remembers to tell her it's forbidden. These men are not to be seen—no photographs.

The troops are friendly but under orders, and there is no access to the fighting. So Meiselas and her colleagues drive back to the town of Osicala where she shoots portraits of displaced refugees. "A hard war to shoot," she says. She knows that there will always be another firefight.

At age 35, Magnum photographer Meiselas has won a reputation as one of this country's top photographers. Her images have not only documented the toll and suffering of war but the responses of people forced to take sides. Raised in suburban New York, Meiselas attended Sarah Lawrence and Harvard and taught in the South Bronx before becoming a full-time photographer. She then traveled throughout New England with women carnival strippers.

In 1978 she traveled to pre-insurrectionary Nicaragua, staying on through the popular but bloody uprising against the Somoza dictatorship. Her work began appearing in *Geo*, *Time*, the *New York Times* and other major publications. Following the war she received the Robert Capa Prize, the Overseas Press Club's gold medal for "exceptional

courage and enterprise."

In 1981 Pantheon published her color-photo book *Nicaragua*, which included 72 of her strongest images from the revolution. She has continued to work in Central America, while helping to edit *El Salvador*, a stark collection of black-and-white images by 30 photographers. The following interview was conducted during a recent trip she made to California.

How did you get involved in photography?

I studied anthropology in college. I got a graduate degree in education, learning to teach using photography. I did this for several years in the public schools before I really identified myself as a photographer. I was interested in how to use photography to stimulate kids to learn. The first photographic project I got involved with became the book *Carnival Strippers*.

What inspired the shift from carnival strippers to the war in Nicaragua?

I didn't go to shoot the war. I went in June 1978 before there was a war. I wouldn't have gone if there'd been one at the time. I doubt I would have had the courage. The war sort of grew up around me.

I saw this enormous article in the *New York Times* about Nicaragua. I was struck by the fact that I'd never heard of it, had no sense of its history or what it looked like. I hadn't really traveled or worked very much outside of the U.S. at the time. I had a sense something was evolving there, but had no idea how fast it was going to happen.

When I got there I didn't speak the language. I was limited in my understanding of what was going on initially, but had this tremendous sense that every day anything could happen.

When things did explode you were shooting a lot of Kodachrome. Why only color?

I shot a little bit of black and

white but mostly color. It felt right to shoot color. It was too alive to be shooting black and white. Now I sort of feel the reverse about El Salvador. I would really rather be shooting black and white, although the magazines demand that you do some color.

Your color photo book from Nicaragua contains very powerful but also very hopeful images. The feeling in the black-and-white Salvador book is different—bleaker.

It is, but that's dictated by reality. On the question of black and white versus color, take John Hoagland's color picture of a Salvadoran soldier juggling oranges over some dead bodies. When you convert it to black and white, the picture doesn't work. But having it in color doesn't make you feel any more hopeful.

How have you experienced the differences between working in Nicaragua and El Salvador?

There are enormous differences.

Susan Meiselas goes beyond the news in shooting Central America. Above, Nicaraguans mourn members killed on the border.



Jean Gaumy/ Magnum

I don't know where to begin. Just the obvious things, like when you covered a demonstration in Nicaragua they didn't shoot you down in the street.

It's also protracted. We've been working in Salvador for four and a half years intensively. I worked a year, intensively, in Nicaragua. There are also similarities, in that both countries are small. You can work both sides of the conflict, which people could not do in Vietnam.

Another big difference is the organization of the right and the death squads in Salvador, which makes our work more difficult. The assumption is that journalists are to blame, that it wouldn't be happening if we weren't there.

Somoza certainly held the press responsible for the bad publicity he was getting, but I don't think the killing of Bill Stewart [an ABC reporter killed by a Nicaraguan soldier at a national-guard roadblock] was really the same as the killing of Koos Koster [one of four Dutch television reporters killed in a Salvadoran army ambush]. There's a lot more suspicion in El Salvador.

More than 14 foreign journalists have been killed in Central America since 1978. You were riding in a car that hit a mine in January 1981. You and John Hoagland were injured. [Hoagland was killed in El Salvador in March of this year.] Do you see any way that the risk can be reduced?

I don't know. It's unfortunate that, because of the risks, the way people work has been affected. They don't live in the small towns. They travel in groups, which means they speak more English and spend less time living with local people.

How does your work as a still photographer differ from that of print reporters or TV network crews?

I have more flexibility. TV crews have to be back by two in order to shoot to the bird [satellite relay]. There are deadlines for written reporters. Of course, even if they weren't there, they can still talk or write about it. We've got

to be there. If we're not, we don't have the evidence of what took place. The photographer is the witness.

How does the growing U.S. presence in the area affect what you do?

It becomes more important to do the work we're doing. The face of U.S. power is not as visible in Salvador or Nicaragua as it is in Honduras. In Honduras, we're all quite polite. We just go on the few press photo opportunities we're given. We have very little chance to document the extent to which the U.S. is really involved. The same is true at the regional level.

Do you get to shoot the way you would like while working for TIME or the other major magazines?

There are different theories about the most effective way to work. If it weren't for the politically polarized situation, the best way to do photo-journalism is to stay as close to your subjects as you can and live and work with them. That's the last thing most magazines want their photographers to do.

The assumption is that one should constantly cross the boundaries and be on all sides. One can, at a certain level, but it's superficial. You cover, you move around a lot, but I'm not sure you get better reporting or documentation that way.

The biggest problem we had doing this book was that there was very little material on daily life. People were not inside anyone's homes, and we're talking about 30 photographers' work over four years.

There's a lot of pressure from the marketplace for photographers to produce images that have already been seen.

Combat and bodies?

Right, which means you need some soldiers and some guerrillas. That's not El Salvador. That's not all there is. But the tendency is to live in the Camino Real [a hotel popular with the press corps] and not venture very far.

How do you get your satisfaction as a working photographer? What gives you a lift?

Making pictures that matter, a photo someone looks at and they're moved or one that makes them understand something or feel it. If pictures can in any way bridge the gap, that means a lot to me.

Books are important because they give otherwise isolated photos a context. Pictures get used in books, magazines, slide shows, posters, all sorts of ways. They stay alive. The image will take on a life of its own separate from the original experience.

Do you find your images in unexpected places?

All the time. The image on the cover of the Nicaraguan book was made into a rug in Monimbo [a neighborhood of Indian artisans in Masaya, Nicaragua]. Another was used on matchboxes. The Salvadorans painted one picture as a mural at the University of Law. Pictures are stolen and used for many more things than I'll ever get to see.

How long do you see the conflict in Central America continuing and how long will you continue to work there?

I think it will go on a very long time. I assume I'll be there. Of course, one never knows beyond the day one lives.

David Helvarg is a free-lance journalist based in San Diego. A version of this article appeared in the San Diego Union.

By Pat Aufderheide

Born in Flames is a feminist manifesto as well as free-wheeling, futuristic entertainment. It was made over several years by New York feminist filmmaker Lizzie Borden, with the help of what seems, from the credits, to be half the independent filmmakers and video artists in the city. It is witty as well as silly.

The film begins 10 years after the democratic socialist takeover of the U.S. government in "the most peaceful revolution the world has ever known." The country is a mixture of Swedish social democracy and corporate America. While the mainstream media celebrate the revolution's anniversary, women at underground feminist radio stations play New Wave music in protest and criticize the staid, middle-class, middle-aged white men in charge of government. They claim that nothing has really changed—women are still paid less than men, fired first from good jobs and hassled by men on the street. Daycare remains a paper project.

While white lesbian feminists on the far left call for instant insurrection and white middle-class feminists work "within the system" putting out a Party-backed newspaper for women, black lesbians led by Adelaide Norris (Jeanne Satterfield) are organizing the Women's Army. (Her advisor is played by veteran feminist activist Flo Kennedy.) A bumbling crew of government spies in salesman-from-Nebraska suits keeps tabs on them. When Adelaide is mysteriously killed, the far leftists reluctantly join the Women's Army, and so do the white women editors, who are fed up with Party whitewash of the case. The army goes on the offensive, interrupting TV transmissions with their call to revolution. Their terrorism mounts until they blow up the World Trade Center.

And then, I suppose, they all live happily ever after. There's a fairy-tale quality to the story that makes it hard to criticize the narrative. Anyone who thinks that democratic socialism could come to the U.S. without conflict and then simply park itself in the heart of corporate capitalism without changing or being changed could also believe in spontaneous insurrection as a way to change the world. Why not? As long as we're fantasiz-

MOVIES

Film fights fantasy war between the sexes

ing, let's have fun. Rare is the New Yorker who hasn't dreamed of blowing up the World Trade Center.

Born in Flames does convey a valuable political lesson. It asserts the existence of an underclass in the U.S. and shows the importance of women in it. They don't have to be poor or black to be forced onto the social margins. It makes you feel—not just see—the feelings of many people toward mainstream politics. Its most engaging characters are so marginalized by the affluent society and stuffed-shirt politics in

which they are trapped that they don't have to reject politics as usual. They've never considered it, and it's never considered them.

This very marginality accentuates the primitive political vision of a film that is highly sophisticated in its form. The film is better at being anti-authoritarian than pro-anything else. The women can disrupt the smug and stifling political world around them, and they can take revenge. But they bring to the future more energy than expertise, ideas or allies. And, like so many others these days, they are overly im-

pressed with the power of the media (as in *Under Fire* or *The Right Stuff*).

In fact, *Born in Flames* is obsessed with the media—the radio stations, the guerrilla transmissions on TV, the women's newspaper, the TV talk show, the nightly news. This is an American future seen not only through its images but also as its images. If all the democratic socialists can offer the American people is potato-head anchormen, the women's alternative seems to be chic New Wave women deejays.

The film also plays with the

IN THESE TIMES APRIL 18-24, 1984 21 medium's power to shock with simple images and their contrast in rapid montage. One in particular reminds you that something quick and dirty can also be strikingly effective. In a sequence on the government's anniversary show, celebrating the many kinds of happy workers in America, you see women wrapping chicken parts in plastic wrap. Juxtaposed is a sequence of an erect penis being wrapped in a condom. We've already moved on to other images before the meaning of that one—and its insouciance—registers. This devilish playfulness typifies the whole film.

In some ways, *Born in Flames* conveys a Rip-van-Winkle feeling. It seems as if the filmmakers took a flying leap from 1968 up to 1983, weathering the intervening years of disillusionment and regrouping without being tempered by them. After the Brinks robbery, even a truly Weatherbeaten New Leftie might rethink urban terrorism as a revolutionary strategy.

The film's style flashes back to Robert Kramer's *Ice* and Andy Warhol and Paul Morrissey's film collaborations because it has the air of being made by a highly self-conscious in-crowd. But Borden plays with film convention in such a freewheeling way that you know something has happened in those intervening years—at least to our synapses.

The film moves without respite between points of view, switching from snatches of mainstream TV to the spies' footage of women's meetings and the filmmakers spying on the spies. Then there are longer sequences in straightforward dramatic and cinemavere styles. The shifts aren't arbitrary—they emphasize the distance between the worlds of the different feminist groups and between feminists and the white-bread world of the white men and their World Trade Center.

Born in Flames is hardly likely to fan the flames of revolution in America; revenge fantasies just aren't enough. But it does provoke, viscerally as well as logically, while it diverts.

Born in Flames is available from First Run Features in New York. It will be shown at the following locations in the near future: Women's Film Festival, Boston—April 29; St. Mark's Cinema, New York—May 4 and 5; UCLA, Gay and Lesbian Union (with a talk by Lizzie Borden)—May 23; U Film Society, Minneapolis—June 1.

FILM CLIPS

Chords of Fame

Chords of Fame is a documentary about the life and death of Phil Ochs, a songwriter/singer of political folk music. Ochs wrote angry, satirical, incisive songs of protest. His popularity in the '60s and subsequent decline reflect the emotional experiences of a generation of American radicals.

Filmmakers Michael Korolenko, David Sternburg and Mady Schutzman include many Ochs songs, performed convincingly by Bill Burnett, who portrays Ochs. Other folksingers—including Pete Seeger, Odetta and Peter Yarrow—perform his songs and give interviews. Stills, stock footage, newspaper clips and a soundtrack of rock and folk music successfully convey the '60s climate—civil rights, Vietnam war protests and cultural rebellion.

Ochs was a complex person who was fiercely committed to radicalism but who also wanted badly to be a star. He never

"made it," unlike his contemporaries Dylan and Baez. In political and personal despair, he committed suicide in 1976. Recalling a song he wrote for Ochs's funeral, Abbie Hoffman sings in a choked-up and off-key voice, "He left us here to sing his songs." Phil Ochs left a substantial legacy, almost a radical star.



tial legacy, movingly captured in this film.

Chords of Fame is available from the Pretty Smart Company, Brooklyn, N.Y.

—Martin Blatt

Dawn of the People

The United Nations has called the Nicaraguan literacy campaign perhaps the most important social movement of this gen-

eration. For the 52 percent of Nicaraguans who could not read or write, this crusade—launched just weeks after the Sandinistas took power in July 1979—gave meaning to revolutionary slogans like "Power to the People," "Education is Liberation" and "People's Democracy." The numbers were impressive: in just one year the illiteracy rate (those unable to read and write at a third-grade level) dropped to 13 percent.

Dawn of the People shows how this happened through interviews with *brigadistas*—young Nicaraguan teachers—and others affected by the campaign. It shows such a poignant picture of what the literacy campaign meant to the Nicaraguans interviewed that viewers may wonder why the camera was allowed to intrude. It is clear that filmmakers Jay Craven, Doreen Kraft and Robin Lloyd were accepted by the local population, or they could never have captured this historic social movement with such refreshing simplicity and with so little narration.

The Nicaraguans speak for themselves—sometimes through words, sometimes just through looks. In one scene the viewer feels that the camera almost takes on a life of its own as a young boy tries to write a word on the blackboard. He erases letters over and over again, for long, almost embarrassing moments. Tension builds as the audience wonders if he is ever going to get it right. And still the camera rolls—as a reminder that no one is going to be left behind.

The film comes with its own workbook, designed for use with film showings or in adult-literacy history, English, education and social studies classes. Its format, language and content make it excellent material for high school humanities classes as well as adult audiences.

Both film and workbook could be excellent tools for erasing some of the media myths surrounding the Sandinistas and the nature of their revolution.

Dawn of the People is available from Icarus Films in New York.

—Beth Bates

Jewel

Continued from page 3

ago, a typical supermarket covered about 10,000 square feet. The Burbank Cub store is typical of the superstores: 70,000 square feet. Some superstores feature drug stores and other retail shops or services as well as an increased range of non-food items. Many of these big new stores also cut corners and are referred to as warehouse stores: shoppers may bag their own purchases, no prices are put on products (since scanners are used at the check-out counter) and items are displayed in large containers often carried by forklift truck to the retail area. Size and cost-cutting permits cutthroat pricing as well as variety. In some cases, wholesalers—such as Super Valu, owners of Cub, have begun to encroach on the traditional retail market.

Jewel pulled out of Milwaukee in 1980 after a price war initiated by Pick'n'Save warehouse stores greatly weakened the dominant Kohl chain. But union officials say that Jewel was new to Milwaukee and weak in marketing. They do not face the same kind of threat in Chicago now.

Some new superstores are non-union, and the UFCW launched a special organizing drive a year ago to win contracts at these stores. But even the majority that is unionized, as the Burbank Cub store is, usually have slightly weaker contracts. More important, they have all new employees. Typically grocery wage scales start very low and progress to a high maximum in a few years. At Jewel, for example, beginners make \$4.25 an hour, but after five and a half years clerks make \$10.90.

The big wage difference reflects the union's history: meatcutters, once a separate union and even now often separate locals despite the merger that formed the UFCW, had an apprentice program, and clerks in the front of the store adopted their model. Also, during the '70s many contracts combined wage scales for part-timers, who make up a large part of grocery workers, with full-timers. At a time when the labor market was tighter, supermarketers wanted to hold experienced employees. "They used to holler and scream, 'How can we stop turnover?'" UFCW Vice-President Peter Voeller, director of the Chicago-based regional office, said. "Now they want turnover."

With the high unemployment of the last few years and the demise of many manufacturing jobs, suddenly supermarket work—especially at the top of the scale—became very attractive, even the

best job in town as the local steel mill or auto plant closed. As a result, Voeller estimates that 80 percent of Jewel employees are at the maximum. That puts older chains like Jewel automatically at a disadvantage against any new store—a competitive disadvantage compounded by the other efficiencies of the superstores.

Typically a supermarket marks up its products by an average of 20-22 percent. Around 10 percent, or half of the operating margin, goes to total labor costs, including management and employment taxes. But the new superstores can often operate on a margin of 15 percent and trim their labor costs to 5-6 percent of the price. And there are plenty of anxious unemployed people ready to take part-time jobs at the low end of the scale.

In this competitive environment, many companies have become more aggressive: mergers have increased and are expected to proliferate; many of the independent stores that challenged chains in recent years will be snapped up or forced out of business; and the chains themselves have been ruthless in their decisions to shut down stores. A&P led the way several years ago as it abandoned many inner-city markets and entire regions (such as Chicago).

Now Kroger is using the tactic partly to bludgeon the union when it resists demands for concessions. During a strike in December, Kroger shut down and sold its Baton Rouge, Louisiana, stores. In Pittsburgh last October, UFCW workers at the largest local chain, Giant Eagle, made "massive concessions," according to international representative Ed McQuaid, after the collapse of a 20-day strike.

Kroger then demanded similar concessions of \$2 an hour. But Kroger workers voted 20 to one to strike, despite management threats to close the stores. They argued that Kroger was not losing money in Pittsburgh, that the company was profitable nationally and that they had already made concessions in 1982. Even so they were willing to take a wage freeze and make "a few adjustments downwards," McQuaid said, in order to meet competition, which included more than 60 area stores represented by the Steelworkers with much weaker contracts. That was not enough. In the midst of the strike, Kroger closed and sold 42 operating stores and three under construction, even though that lost them an estimated \$15-\$20 million.

"Within two weeks of Pittsburgh, we got six major labor contract concessions," Lawrence M. Turner, Kroger director of capital management boasted in the trade press. "I think we were heard." Kroger continues to threaten closings to get concessions and warns that it will not hesitate at "redeploying underproducing assets." One indication of the willingness of the company—and the industry—to shift capital rapidly: in 1983 Kroger built 81 new markets and closed or sold 71. Union researchers say that companies now monitor individual stores' profitability much more closely, and carefully pick new sites in growth areas and higher income suburbs.

Although Kroger could plead that its profits dropped in 1983, the union says much of the problem came from a \$625 million stock swap to buy Dillon Companies, a Western chain. Profits were diverted to buy back stock to reduce dilution of ownership, and workers were expected to pay for that.

In this climate it isn't surprising that more companies are joining such classic anti-union grocers as the Southern Winn-Dixie firm in fighting unionization. The UFCW has held its own in some places, but not all: in Omaha, grocery stores were 70 percent unionized five years ago, less than 20 percent today.

Who loses?

There are other victims—many of the traditional and independent supermarkets. Numerous cooperative groceries founded in the late '60s and '70s have also folded, and even longer-established coops, such as those in Berkeley, Calif., have been forced to retrench. In Indianapolis independent grocers filed a lawsuit against Kroger and Cub to stop their price war that was driving the smaller

companies out of business. The National Grocers Association is pressing Congress for protection against predatory pricing.

But won't the consumer, at least, benefit from this competition and lowering of labor costs? Thomas K. Zancha, president of the National Grocers Association, argues that a big chain often works to dominate a local market by operating on a margin of 2 to 3 percent below what is required to break even at first. Then when one company dominates a market, prices are higher. With cutthroat competition, he says, in the long run the consumer loses more than with "normal competition."

Although superstores offer advantages to some customers, the poor, the elderly, inner-city residents and others generally cannot take advantage of them because of travel problems. As independents and older neighborhood stores are wiped out, grocery shopping becomes less convenient for most people, despite the superstore appeal of finding everything—even banks and hairdressers—under the same roof. Many pro-consumer advocates also object to elimination of individual product pricing.

The union, which has not fought technological change in the industry, agrees with these criticisms but also argues that consumers ultimately lose when there is a downward spiral in wages. Eventually the consumer's own purchasing power is threatened as his or her employer points to auto, steel and grocery workers as examples and demands concessions.

Nevertheless, grocery workers continue to give up wages, work rules and benefits. But both union and company representatives believe there is a new mood of resistance. Last year strikes were up 30 percent in the industry. This year 300,000 grocery workers renew contracts.

"When it was their way or no way at all, we had to resist," explained Ronald Powell, president of the local at Chicago Jewel stores. Voeller claims the mood is widespread. "I believe workers are now saying this has been going on too long. I have found groups of workers when presented with requests to accept rollbacks saying enough is enough is enough. I can see a definite turn in attitudes."

Besides its organizing drive, the UFCW is encouraging merger of clerk and meat-cutter locals and coordinated bargaining. Regional director Norma Steill said, "While we gave back [in Texas, Arkansas and Louisiana], if it hadn't been for coordination, we would probably have given back more." Also, the UFCW has taken some limited moves to curb the gradual erosion of standards that comes when stores are picked off bit by bit. In negotiations with Albertson's, a strongly anti-union West Coast chain, the international recently instructed all locals that they had to clear any concessions first with the UFCW leadership.

Jerry Menapace, UFCW vice-president and director of the retail division, described the bind the union is in facing concession pressures. "Obviously our policy is no concessions," he said. "But we are cognizant there are certain problems, and we are aware of the autonomy of local unions." The international discourages givebacks to healthy companies, but "our union is not blind," he said. "We don't have our head in the sand. When a company shows genuine need, we transmit all that information to the members involved."

Yet Menapace is aware that such concessions are like the governor calling a condemned man for temporary reprieve just before midnight: the axe may still fall. "When a group gives concessions for whatever reason, that leads to a procession by all the others," he said. "If

members do it, it has an impact like domino theory. If they don't, they're unemployed in many cases."

The double bind affects organizing as well. "You tell people in Podunk, USA, they can't make concessions because it will hurt their neighbors, and then the store closes," Menapace said. "Then an independent moves into the void and it's harder to organize workers." Yet when concessions are made, many workers say, why do I need a union to give up wages? Menapace rejoins, "Workers make concessions, not the union."

Norma Steill says, "Members are afraid of losing their jobs and have fixed expenses and are not inclined to fight. When members don't want to fight, there's not much we can do." So, like many union leaders, she is looking to November.

Will there be a turnaround? "Only if we get rid of Reagan," she answered. "That will change it all. If we don't, we'll get more of the same and worse." But once the shark has tasted blood, it may not change its diet so readily.

A few months ago UFCW President William Wynn was hopeful that the take-back era was ending in retail foods. But now Menapace says, "I don't think the onslaught has ended, and I don't think the greed has ended. That's primarily because of the Supreme Court decision on *Bildisco*," which broadened use of bankruptcy against union contracts. It changes the mood of both workers and employers.

"If you had suggested two or three years ago that a company in the middle of a contract would simply unilaterally reduce wages, people would have said you're crazy," Menapace said. "I think they believe they have fast, close friends in the administration, the courts and the NLRB. And they do. It's the attitude that my uncle owns the store, and I can take what I want.... So I expect most employers will take full advantage of this to roll back wages and benefits solely for the benefit of their bottom line. But I would caution those employers that the pendulum will swing back, and I hope they have adequate memories of what they have done."

CALENDAR

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CHICAGO, IL

May 3

PSR Chicago features William Vandercook of the University of Illinois on "Civil Dissent and the Social History of Nuclear War," Thursday, May 3 at 6:30 p.m. *No Place to Hide*, a film about growing up in the shadow of the bomb, will be shown. Bigler Auditorium, Children's Memorial Hospital, Lincoln and Fullerton.

May 5

Peter Seeger, Jane Sapp-Saturday, May 5, Peoples Church, 941 W. Lawrence. Tickets for 1:30 p.m. concert \$8, \$5 seniors, children 12 and under (general admission). Evening concert, 7:30 p.m., tickets \$10, reserved seating. Ticketmaster, 559-1212, and the concert committee, 778-8801, P.O. Box 43054, 60643. Benefit for the Highlander Center and The People, Yes!

May 20

Performances for Peace presents 17 members of the Chicago Symphony Orchestra in an all-Bach program. May 20, 3:00 p.m., St. Thomas the Apostle Church, 5472 S. Kimbark. Program is a benefit for PSR Chicago, Illinois Nuclear Weapons Freeze Campaign, and Musicians Against Nuclear Arms. Call (312) 663-1781 for ticket information.

INDIANA, PA

October 24-26

Indiana University of Pennsylvania will hold a conference on the global economy. Speakers include: Richard Barnet, Dave Lyson, Barbara Ehrenreich, Tim Harrison, David Landes, Ann Markusen, June Nash, Harley Shaiken, Tim Shorroch and Immanuel Wallerstein. Information: Irwin Marcus, History Department, IUP, Indiana, PA 15705, (412) 357-2237.

A follow-up on A&P experiment

When A&P threatened to shut down its stores in Philadelphia, Local 1357 of the United Food and Commercial Workers decided to experiment. Under the leadership of President Wendell Young, they bought two stores to be owned and operated by workers. They also established an investment fund in their union contract with A&P to underwrite future worker-owned firms (*In These Times*, June 2, 1982).

Now in *Future Bread: How Retail Workers Ransomed Their Jobs and Lives* by Dennis Clark and Merry Guben the story of that experiment is told in detail, including extensive advice on design of a worker cooperative. The authors also give concise, valuable comments on retail trade work and the response of U.S. unions to any form of worker management or ownership. Despite the antagonistic attitudes of even many of his colleagues in the UFCW, Young has become a leading and imaginative union advocate of worker ownership.

Future Bread is available for \$6.95 from O&O Investment Fund, Inc., 119 Cuthbert St., Philadelphia, PA 19106.

—D.M.

BEQUESTS

When drafting your will please consider making a bequest to *In These Times*.

For information contact: Felicity Bensch, 1300 W. Belmont, Chicago, IL 60657 (312)472-5700.

Deejay

Continued from page 24

ahead of the times, Mojo stretched the traditionally conservative "black contemporary" program format to include "new music" acts such as Kraftwerk and Culture Club and rock'n'rollers such as Jimi Hendrix and the Rolling Stones, as well as such straight-ahead funksters as Parliament-Funkadelic and Shalamar.

Upon moving from WGPR to WJLB last year, in order to "try something different," Mojo has succeeded where

others (most notably WABX-FM, another Detroit station that's trying to program a mix of new music, funk and rock) have failed.

"You need a lot of ingredients to make it all work out. It's just not enough to play new music and sit back and wait for listeners to come to you. You've got to reach out to them," Mojo explains.

He does this through his Midnight Funk Association, as well as spirited monologues that go much further than the usual radio blather in addressing the concerns of his young audience.

"In the middle of the night," he recently recited, "When you feel real fright; when you wonder whether or not you're

going to make it to daylight; when you're alone and you feel like you're by yourself...when you're one of us, you feel the power of our presence. When you're at a party, y'know at midnight all you have to do is turn your radio on, and then turn your radio up, and then I'll turn your radio out."

With this, the background of creepy orchestral music over which Mojo has been speaking shifts into a rousing, Sousa-like band march, and he starts telling his listeners how to get their official Midnight Funk Association ID cards.

And Mojo's success has not gone unnoticed. Last summer Lee Abrams, one of the main architects of the album-

oriented rock (AOR) format that swept over so many radio stations in the mid-'70s, set the music business on its ear by announcing that his "Superstars '83" format, which has over 110 client stations, has been radically revised. The new "Superstars" format strikingly resembles those designed by Electrifying Mojo and his colleagues at other urban contemporary stations. Other AOR programmers may soon follow Abrams' lead, so that bi-racial, danceable and watered-down versions of Mojo's format may soon be heard all over the FM dial.

Bill Brown is a music critic for the Michigan Voice and the Ann Arbor News.

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ATHEIST HAS AFFAIR WITH SEDUCTIVE CHRISTIAN FUNDAMENTALIST in Carl Shapiro's "vibrant and provocative" 1984 novel, *No Candy, No Flowers*. Softcover \$7.50 ppd. Independent Publications, Box 162, Paterson, NJ 07543.

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Mojo moves into the vanguard



By Bill Brown

ANN ARBOR, MI

ONCE UPON A TIME, ROCK'N'-roll disc jockeys mattered. They did more than just read commercials, announce the time and amuse themselves with glib talk. The deejays of the '50s and '60s had deep feeling for the tunes they were spinning. They played what they and their listeners wanted to hear. They proselytized. Without them, rock'n'roll music would never have grown into the billion-dollar business it is today.

The irony is that as the deejays helped the record companies and concert promoters identify and exploit untapped reservoirs of teenage musical obsession, they were simultaneously dooming their own careers. By the early '70s, popular deejays, with their own attitudes on music were a threat to the mushrooming music business. They could only "complicate things" by offering radio listeners "confusing alternatives" to the products that the record and concert industry were pushing. So today most deejays are little more than trained voices who fill in the gaps between songs and commercials.

Mojo working.

But one exception to this trend is the Electrifying Mojo, a deejay on WJLB-FM, an "urban contemporary" station in Detroit. Mojo plays whatever he wants, and what he plays—everything from Fleetwood Mac's soft rock and J. Geils Band's blustery blues-rock to Prince's idiosyncratic funk and Kraftwerk's European techno-pop—undermines the record companies' and concert promoters' policy that black and white music should be kept separate, if equal.

And the Electrifying Mojo breaks racial and musical barriers in a big way—his late-night show is one of the most popular in Michigan. According to recent Arbitron ratings, WJLB is the most popular music radio station in Detroit, and Mojo is WJLB's most popular deejay. Each night, he's listened to by almost 17 percent of the people who have their radios on. The percentage is even higher for teens.

Yet Mojo's popularity isn't confined to inner-city blacks; young whites tune

in as well. There are more than 50,000 card-carrying members of Mojo's "Midnight Funk Association," and, according to Mojo, almost half of them are from the surrounding counties. In suburban Washtenaw County, for example, he manages to draw a whopping 60 percent of the teenage audience.

Despite his popularity, Mojo insists on anonymity. He rarely has his photograph taken, and when he does, it's a profile shot. In a recent interview with *In These Times*, Mojo claimed the reason for this is that he's "much more of an observer than a participant. I like being able to go out places and not carry

some sort of parade around with me."

Born Charles Johnson in Little Rock, Ark., in 1948, the Electrifying Mojo took an early interest in radio. KALO-FM was the station in his area that played rock'n'roll, and Mojo remembers hearing not just one style of rock'n'roll, "but a little bit of everything."

At 16, Mojo landed his first radio show at Little Rock's college radio station, KOKY-FM, where he acquired his nickname from "Got My Mojo Working," Muddy Waters' classic blues song.

He stayed with KOKY until he was drafted and sent to Vietnam in 1966. The nickname stayed with him as he spun discs at an Army radio station in the Philippines. In the early '70s, Mojo moved to Ann Arbor, Mich., to study law, but wound up instead at local radio station WAAM-FM.

After nearly five years there Mojo moved on to a longstanding project, which he describes in his own unique manner:

"It's long been the desire of the metro to experience advanced sounds and concepts with the technological advances of our time. The concept of this musical phenomena was vicariously released on the night of April 1, 1977, while awaiting the appropriate space and time that direct contact could be made with your generation, who has become bored with the idiosyncratic perpetuation of rhythmic traditions that've become oblivious to our *modus operandi*."

In other words, on April 1, 1977, Mojo began what would turn out to be a highly successful five-year stint as the midnight deejay on WGPR-FM, a progressive black religious station that broadcasts from Toledo. Motivated by a desire to stay

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